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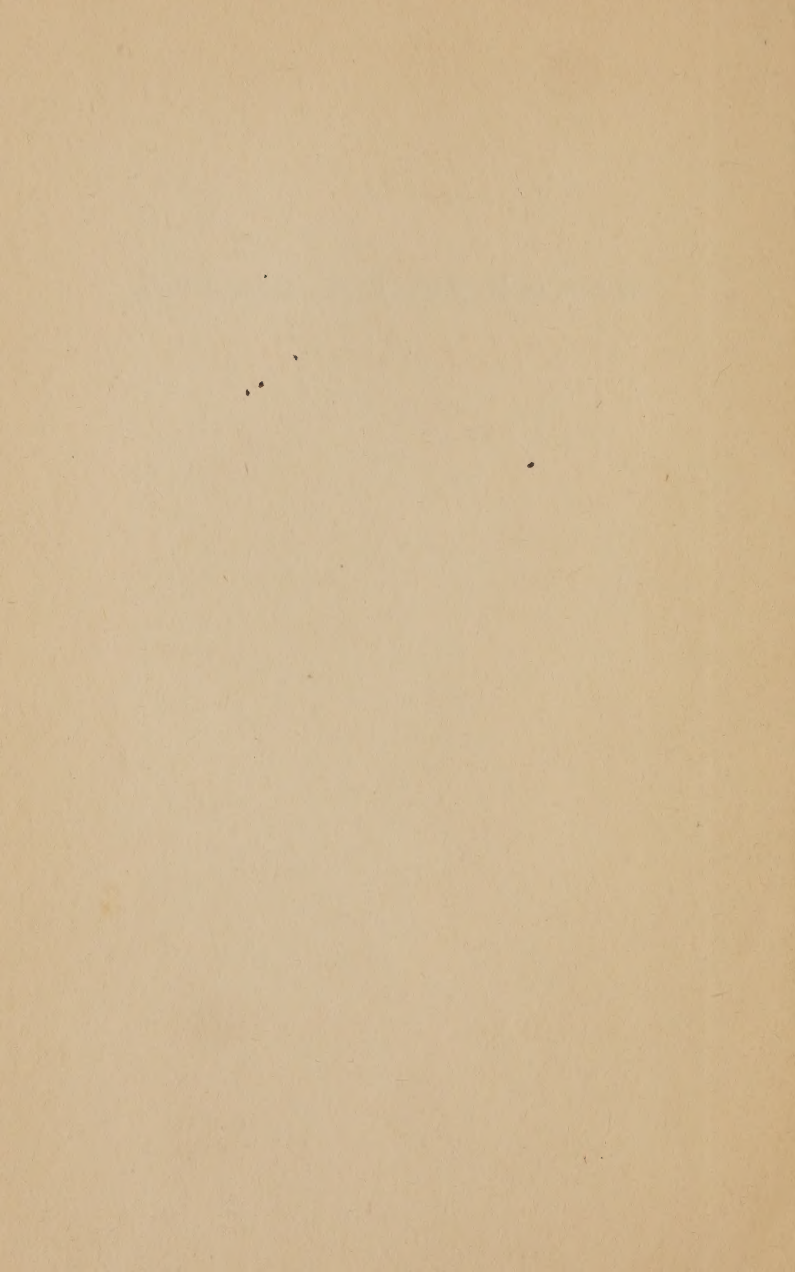
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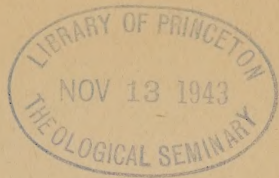
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Christ and Christian

education

CHRIST AND CHRISTIAN EDUCATION





*Christ
and
Christian Education*

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TO THE MINISTERS, UPON WHOM RESTS
THE PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE
EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CHURCH'S PRO-
GRAM OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION, THIS
BOOK IS DEDICATED

Foreword

THE PURPOSE OF THIS BOOK IS TO GIVE A BRIEF BUT comprehensive interpretation of what modern Christian education is seeking to accomplish and of the basic assumptions that underlie its subject matter and procedure. Christian education, like Christianity itself, is a historical process that has undergone marked changes in the course of more than nineteen centuries. During no period in its history has the educational work of the church undergone more fundamental and significant changes than during the four decades of the present century.

What are these changes? What are the ideas and values that lie back of them? How do they find expression in the aims, the subject matter, and the method of modern Christian education? What is the place of the Bible in modern Christian education, especially that part of it that records the life and teachings of Christ, from whom the historic Christian movement grew? How should religion be related to the total education of American childhood and youth? Above all, does Christian education bring the religion of Christ, whose name it bears,

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into vital and functional relation to the experience of living and growing persons? How Christian is Christian education? These are some of the questions upon which the following pages seek to throw light.

The chapters in this book were originally delivered as lectures in the Harriet Drake Kirkham-Hay Memorial Lectureship of the College of the Bible of Drake University, in February of 1942, before the Interdenominational Convocation of Iowa Ministers. They were later delivered as lectures at the Pastor's Institute at the University of Chicago, in August of 1942. It was the purpose of the lectures to interpret the ideals and procedures of modern Christian education to groups of ministers who, more than any other leaders in the local church, are responsible for carrying out effectively the church's educational program.

It is hoped that these lectures may be of equal interest to laymen upon whom, under the present organization of Protestant churches, rests the primary task of Christian education at the point where the educational process actually touches the lives of children, young people, and adults in local churches and communities.

It is also hoped that these lectures may be useful to public school authorities and teachers who are

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concerned with making the resources of religion available in the total education of the children and youth of the nation and who are desirous of knowing more fully how the educational forces of the Protestant churches conceive their task and of exploring the possibilities of a more satisfactory relation between religious education and public education.

For permission to draw freely upon certain of my previously published materials I wish to thank the University of Chicago Press, Harper and Brothers, Charles Scribner's Sons, Willett, Clark and Company, and the editors of *The Christian Century*, *Religion in Life*, and *Religion in the Making*. The biblical quotations are from *The Bible—An American Translation*, by J. M. P. Smith and Edgar J. Goodspeed, with permission of the University of Chicago Press.

W. C. B.

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1

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AFTER NINETEEN CENTURIES

*P*ERHAPS THE BEST WAY TO AN UNDERSTANDING OF what modern Christian education is seeking to accomplish is to view it in contrast with the church's education during the centuries that have intervened between Christ and Christian education today. Only so is it possible fully to understand the fundamental assumptions upon which its procedures are based and their implication, not only for the educational program of the modern church, but for the relation of religion to general education.

I

During more than nineteen centuries Christian education, like Christianity itself, has undergone many changes. It is no more possible to speak of

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Christian education in general than it is to speak of Christianity in general. Instead it is necessary to speak of the specific purposes, content, and method of the church's educational work during specific periods of the church's developing life. Christian education is a process in which continuity and change are inseparably united. Moreover, every change in the educational work of the church has been in relation to changes in the general culture and in the life of the Christian community itself.

At no time in its history have these changes been greater than they are in our generation. As in the historic periods of the past, these changes are in relation to profound changes in contemporary culture and in the thought and life of the modern church.

In carrying forward its educational program the modern church is well within its historic tradition. The educational work of the church had its beginning in the educational ministry of Jesus. Throughout its career the church has regarded education as one of its primary functions. As early as the middle of the first century (54-55) Paul in one of the earliest literary products of the early church places the rank of teaching third in the functions of the primitive church, superseded only by the work of the apostles and inspired preaching. "God," he

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said, "has placed people in the church, first as apostles, second as inspired preachers, third as teachers, then wonder-workers; then come ability to cure the sick, helpfulness, administration, ecstatic speaking."¹

The earliest systematic education by the early church was through its catechumenal schools of the first and second centuries. These schools were designed to prepare persons for membership in the church through elementary instruction in Christian beliefs and moral discipline. The catechumens included children of believers as well as adult Jews and heathen converts.

Later, when the need for trained leadership became urgent because of the increasing number of educated persons who were drawn to the church, catechetical schools which were prototypes of the modern theological seminary developed out of the catechumenal schools from the latter part of the second century onward. Some of these, as at Antioch and Alexandria, were notable; and some of the men who taught in them, such as Clement and Origen, were among those most responsible for the formulation of the Christian faith and among the most distinguished figures in the history of the church.

With the rise of the episcopacy and the cathedral

¹ I Cor. 12:28.

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residence of the bishop, a further development of these earlier forms of Christian education arose—the cathedral schools which spread throughout both the eastern and the western branches of Christendom. In these schools the clergy were trained under the direct supervision of the bishop, while general education was given to converts. These schools were highly organized under specific rules or canons as early as the latter half of the fourth century.

The monasteries, which had their origin in Egypt in the fourth century, became, after Benedict in the sixth century, the home of learning throughout the Middle Ages. The Benedictine rule that required that each monk should spend two hours of each day in reading led to the copying and collection of manuscripts, as well as to the education of novitiates. The educational efforts of the monasteries were extended to schools for boys in the surrounding communities. Education was also provided for women in convents and for their sisters in the outside world. The medieval universities of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were the outgrowth of the cathedral and monastery schools. Their impetus stemmed from religious interests. Those of England and France, with their central interests in dialectic and philosophy, grew out of theological controversy. Those in the north of Italy, with their

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interest in law, had their rise in the conflict between ecclesiastical and secular authorities. Those in southern Italy, with their concern for medicine, were inspired by contact with Saracen learning as a result of the Crusades.

The Reformation, with its emphasis upon the Bible as the Protestant basis of authority in faith and conduct, gave a new emphasis and extension to Christian education. The conception of salvation through faith, resting upon the Bible, made it of the greatest importance that the common man should be able to read. The result was universal and compulsory education in Saxony in the sixteenth century. These schools in Saxony and other German centers laid the foundations for modern systems of education for all the people as a social obligation.

The earliest schools in America were predominantly Christian. The earliest colleges in America were religious foundations designed primarily for the training of the Christian clergy. The typical American college of liberal arts is a child of the church. Only 17 of the 246 colleges founded before 1860 were state institutions. At the present time, of the 1,690 institutions of higher learning in the United States, most of the 1,090 privately controlled were founded and are now operated by the churches.

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Since the exclusion of religion from the public schools around the middle of the nineteenth century, the educational program of the church as carried on through the Sunday, weekday, and vacation church school has increasingly become one of the primary interests of the modern church. More and more, Christian education is becoming an integral part of the church's total operation, and the educational method is diffusing itself throughout every activity of the church.

II

As has been suggested, the educational work of the church had its beginning in the educational ministry of Jesus. As he appears in the Gospels, he was thought of by his disciples and by his contemporaries as a teacher. Matthew in the second oldest Gospel sums up a significant period of his ministry in terms of his teaching activities: "He went all over Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing any disease or sickness among the people."² He himself accepted this designation as being most characteristic of his relations with his disciples. The subsequent centuries have bestowed upon him the unique title of The Great Teacher.

² Matt. 4:23.

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It is therefore of the greatest importance that the modern Christian educator should examine afresh Christ's educational ministry as the foundation upon which, historically, his own efforts at Christian education rest. When one does this, divesting the Gospels of the theological coloring of centuries and reading them naïvely as they should be read, one is immediately impressed with the striking contrast between the spirit, content, and method of Christ's teaching and the spirit, content, and method of traditional Christian education. It is as though one had stepped out of one world into another. Leaving the formal classroom, texts, lectures, lesson plans, syllabi, schedules, and examinations, one finds oneself in a simple, natural, outdoor world of people, nature, interests vital to living, and the ebb and flow of commonplace activities. In this natural human scene Jesus moves among the people, observing their activities, concerned with their interests and problems, and commenting upon their experiences with rare insight and sympathy. One is out of the oppressive atmosphere of tradition and authority; one is in the midst of life.

When one makes every possible allowance for the modification of the accounts of the doings and sayings of Jesus through their use in preaching and in the emerging life of the Christian community before

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they were reduced to writing in the Gospels, the person of Jesus and the character of his teaching are very clear in their basic outlines. In understanding Jesus' way of education one is greatly helped if one keeps in mind the Jewish background from which he received his religious inheritance and which formed the rich content of his attitudes and ideas. From the open pages of the Gospels at least four characteristics of Christ's way of education stand out.

1. He began, not with formulated beliefs, subject matter, tradition, or even with the Bible of his day, but with living persons where they were in their experience of life. One looks in vain for set and formal discourse in the teaching of Jesus. New Testament scholars are quite agreed that the so-called Sermon on the Mount is a collection of sayings that were uttered on many different occasions and were only later gathered together for teaching and preaching purposes before they found literary expression in the Gospels. The same is true of the parables. Indeed, not a few scholars believe that an analysis of the Gospels reveals that in their original form the teachings of Jesus occurred only in disconnected sayings, as did also the accounts of the events of his life, and that through the processes of preaching, teaching, and use in the Christian community they

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were brought together into groupings and finally into the more or less connected narratives that we find in the written Gospels.

These running comments of Jesus were evoked by or drawn from the everyday experiences of the common life—a farmer sowing grain, a housewife baking bread, a builder laying a foundation, a father waiting for the return of his erring son, a betrothed maiden searching for her lost token, lamplighting at the approach of evening, a shepherd's search for a strayed sheep, a husbandman hiring laborers, a learned teacher in a night interview, a woman drawing water from the well, fishermen mending their nets, a carpet of wild flowers on the hillside, the flight of birds, criticism of his disciples' plucking grain on the Sabbath, a question intended to embarrass him, people conducting a market in the temple. They are of the warp and woof of human relations in which living persons are bound up like threads in an intricate tapestry pattern.

In the light of traditional Christian education, this was astonishingly true of Jesus' use of his Bible, which was, of course, the Old Testament. That his mind was richly stored with its treasures there can be no doubt. It was as familiar to him as his mother tongue. But he did not start with the Scripture; he started with the experience of living people.

From these experiences he turned to the Scripture for the illumination it could throw upon them. But the sequence was first the experience and then the Scripture. What seems on the surface to be an exception to this procedure—when he commented on the passage from Isaiah in the synagogue at Nazareth—is, on deeper reflection, really not an exception. If, as seems most likely, the passage was of his own choosing, its selection was in response to the situation created by his profound conviction of his vocation and its immediate relation to the human needs to which his ministry was addressed.

2. Jesus thought of religion as a quality of life diffused throughout every phase of the living person's interests and activities. It was as these everyday experiences were interpreted, judged, and carried through in terms of the human values involved and of one's responsible relation to God that for him they took on religious meaning. The way to God was through the discernment and fulfillment of the natural human relations of the common life: "When I was hungry, you gave me food, when I was thirsty you gave me something to drink, when I was a stranger, you invited me to your homes, when I had no clothes, you gave me clothes, when I was sick, you looked after me, when I was in prison you came to see me. . . . In so far as you did it to one of the

humblest of these brothers of mine, you did it to me.”³ Religion with Jesus was never a specialized interest apart from the rest of life, localized in special times and places or limited to ceremonial acts. Instead the most trenchant indictments in the sayings of Jesus were leveled at official, priestly, scribal, institutionalized religion.⁴ It is not without significance that the word “religion” nowhere appears in the Gospels. This was entirely in keeping with Jesus’ Jewish inheritance. He spoke only in terms of life and of vital divine-human relationships. In reply to a highly controversial test question put to him by a learned ecclesiastic he said: “‘You must love the Lord your God with your whole heart, your whole soul, and your whole mind.’ That is the great, first command. There is a second like it: ‘You must love your neighbor as you do yourself.’ These two commands sum up the whole of the Law and Prophets.”⁵ According to the Gospel of John he summed up his mission in terms of life: “I have come to let them have life, and let them have it in abundance.”⁶

3. Rather than give them ready-made solutions drawn either from tradition or from the Scriptures,

³ Matt. 25:35-36, 40.

⁴ See, for example, Matt. 23.

⁵ Matt. 22:37-40.

⁶ John 10:10.

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Jesus threw people back upon their own resources. When a rich young man came to him asking what good deed he must do to inherit eternal life, Jesus, before pointing out his lack, threw him back upon his unsatisfactory experience with the Law.⁷ So also, when an expert in the Law asked him a similar question to test him, he threw the inquirer back upon his knowledge as a legal specialist: "What does the Law say? How does it read?" When the expert answered by quoting from the ancient Hebrew Scriptures the two passages which Jesus himself had on another occasion quoted as summarizing the Law and the Prophets, but caviled by asking who was his neighbor, Jesus gave the parable of the Good Samaritan.⁸ When certain Pharisees sought to embarrass him by asking him whether as a loyal Jew one should pay the Roman poll tax, he asked them to show him a tribute coin circulating in their currency. "Whose head and title is this?" he asked. When they were forced to reply that it was the emperor's, their obligation was as good as confessed.⁹

If some of the teachings of Jesus seem to be more didactic than the illustrations cited, it must be remembered that the use which the early church made of them for preaching and teaching purposes had a

⁷ Matt. 19:16-21.

⁸ Luke 10:25-37.

⁹ Mark 12:13-17.

profound effect upon their general form. This influence is now fully recognized by biblical scholars, and the changes can in many cases be definitely traced. This is clearly seen, for example, in the Gospel of Matthew, in which at the time it was written the church had begun to assume more or less definite institutional form. This influence is especially notable in the Gospel of John, in which it is impossible to separate the original events or sayings of Jesus from the author's interpretation. But it was effectually at work even in the earliest Gospel, Mark. For this reason it is next to impossible to get back to the original words of Jesus.

4. Jesus placed his emphasis upon action as the outcome of thinking and purposing. "It is not everyone who says to me 'Lord! Lord!' who will get into the Kingdom of Heaven, but only those who do the will of my Father in heaven."¹⁰ The proof of one's integrity, like that of the tree, is in its fruit.¹¹ John reports a saying of Jesus appealing to the overt act as proof of his divine mission: "The very things that I am doing are proof that my Father has sent me."¹² The same late writer ascribes to Jesus the statement that the way to learn the truth of his teaching is to put it to the test in action: "Any-

¹⁰ Matt. 7:21.

¹¹ Matt. 12:33.

¹² John 5:36.

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one who resolves to do his will will know whether my teaching comes from God, or originates with me.”¹³ In an older source, when John the Baptist was torn with doubt as to whether Jesus was the expected messenger, Jesus did not resort to prophecy or argument, but to deeds: “Go and report to John what you hear and see. The blind are regaining their sight and the lame can walk, the lepers are being cured and the deaf can hear, the dead are being raised and good news is being preached to the poor.”¹⁴

In sum, religion with Jesus was a vital experience of life in terms of its spiritual values and of its responsible relation to God. It was a direct experience, unmediated by tradition, ritual, or ecclesiastical institution. There was in his teaching a freshness, a reality, and an authenticity that stood out in striking contrast with the externalism of the learned official teachers of his day, who appealed to tradition and authority for the validation of their ideas. Since he himself had arisen out of the common life and had been unspoiled by formal “schooling,” it is no wonder that “the mass of the people liked to hear him,” and that “they were amazed at his teach-

¹³ John 7:17.

¹⁴ Matt. 11:4-6.

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ing, for he taught them like one who had authority, and not like the scribes.”¹⁵

III

With the development of historic Christianity, however, Christian education as it found its initial expression in the life and teaching of Christ underwent a profound change. As we have seen, Jesus was concerned with an immediate experience of the common life in terms of its dynamic religious values—with people face to face with the issues of living. In historic Christianity education came to be conceived in terms of discipline and the transmission of an authoritative tradition. Thus through the processes of history Christ's way of education underwent transformation. It was this transmissive and authoritative Christian education which the church of the twentieth century inherited from the intervening nineteen centuries. It was the church's, as contrasted with Christ's, conception of Christian education.

This transformation was gradual and involved several steps which it is not difficult to trace. It began immediately after Jesus' death and resurrection and is clearly reflected in the literature of the New Testament. It reached its full expression many cen-

¹⁵ Mark 1:22.

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turies later. Let us examine the factors that were responsible for such a transformation.

The early church began its career with a profound sense of mission. It felt itself to possess a message which it was under divine obligation to proclaim to the whole world. This conviction was first attested in deeds—in the evangelism of the earliest disciples and in the missionary labors of Paul—before it found literary expression in the Gospels in the form of the Great Commission. In fact, in the oldest Gospel the Great Commission appears only as an ancient appendix to the original text.

We owe the earliest literature of the New Testament to this evangelistic passion. The first writings of what is now our New Testament were the letters of Paul, written in the years 50-61. They were the outgrowth of Paul's evangelizing activities, the letters of a missionary to the rising churches which he founded in Asia Minor and Greece, with the exception of the letter to the congregation at Rome. This letter was written in preparation for a contemplated visit of the missionary on his way to Spain. The presence of the church in Rome is witness to the evangelistic efforts of other leaders in the early church which did not find such literary expression as Paul's did. It is evident from his writings that the message which Paul preached in winning con-

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verts to Christianity in the Gentile world was a simple and urgent gospel—the death and resurrection of Jesus.

We also owe the Gospels to the same evangelistic efforts of the early church. One of the most fruitful insights of modern biblical scholars is the discovery that the Gospels were preaching materials. They were addressed to different audiences in the pagan Greco-Roman world in an effort to win them to Christ. One cannot read them with full understanding until one has the “feel” of these respective audiences with their different interests, backgrounds, and religious needs. This use determined the selection and arrangement of the content of each Gospel as well as its temper and its placement of emphasis. This purpose is quite explicitly stated in the latest of the Gospels: “There were many other signs that Jesus showed before his disciples which are not recorded in this book. But these have been recorded so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and through believing you may have life as his followers.”¹⁶ Their message, like that of Paul, was centered in the death and resurrection of Jesus.

For many years before the first Gospel was written, around A.D. 70, there existed an oral tradition

¹⁶ John 20:30-31.

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which transmitted by the living word the memory of what Jesus said and did. With the writing of the Synoptic Gospels between 70 and 90 and the collection of Paul's letters between 90 and 95, the nucleus of a Christian tradition began to take on definite and permanent form. This nucleus was further augmented and established when the four Gospels were collected around 125. Both the letters of Paul and the Gospels give evidence that already reflection had begun to arise around the person of Jesus and the meaning of his life and death. These reflections were the beginnings of an emerging theology that in time was to become a massive, overarching metaphysical system.

Moreover, the conflicts of emergent Christianity with Judaism and the mystery religions of the pagan Greco-Roman world necessitated a definition and elaboration of the content of Christian faith. This tendency was greatly accelerated by contact with Greek and Oriental philosophy. In addition to these contacts with Jewish and pagan religions, it was inevitable that differences should arise within the Christian movement itself. Consequently, the early church felt the need of an *authentic tradition* by which it might judge heretical tendencies of which there were many. Meantime the volume of Christian literature was increasing, as the author of Luke-

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Acts points out in the introduction to his work, and as is evidenced by the later books of the New Testament which constituted only a part of the productivity of the early Christian community.

It was out of this felt need for an authentic tradition that the canon of the New Testament grew. As the word suggests, its purpose was to provide a standard by which to judge the *orthodoxy* of various tendencies of thought within the growing church. The chief contribution which the Church Fathers made to the expanding Christian movement from Clement at the end of the first century to Augustine in the fifth century was the definition of the content of Christian faith—such as the doctrine of the Logos in relation to Greek philosophy in the first and second centuries, the defense of Christianity against the Jews on the one hand and the Gentiles on the other during the second and third centuries, the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation in the fourth century, and the doctrine of God's sovereignty and man's free will in relation to sin and redemption in the late fourth and early fifth centuries. Simultaneously and as a part of this process, the organization of the canon as an authorized body of Scripture went forward, by the selection of certain approved books and the rejection of others. For a long time there were different canons in different areas of Christen-

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dom. By the fourth century the list of books as they appear in our New Testament was generally approved by the western church, and by the end of the seventh century the canon was adopted by conciliar action for the whole church.

Functional and necessary as this process may have been, the development of the canon had a marked effect upon historic Christianity. For one thing, it resulted in the selection of *one interpretation* of the Christian faith from a number of potential interpretations, any one of which might have become, under other circumstances, the accepted interpretation, perhaps to the detriment of the movement. Second, once the canon had gained acceptance, the official orthodox interpretation was supported by an appeal to authoritative Scripture. To this twofold accomplished fact—the adoption of one authentic tradition and a supporting Scripture—was added the doctrine of a kind of supernatural inspiration of the Scriptures which endowed them with a greatly enhanced authority external to experience. Third, the selection of one tradition sanctioned by an authoritative Scripture not only excluded the addition of later Christian literature, but tended to fix the pattern of historic Christian thought, and to inhibit any attempt to reinterpret Christian thought in the light of cultural change and the scientific discoveries of

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the modern world. It has tended in the minds of many Christians to render God's revelation of himself static and formal and confined to the past, as though his creative relation to the world had ceased with the death of the last apostle.

Within this authoritative tradition, Christian theology has through the subsequent centuries built its vast structure of metaphysical thought. Through these same centuries the simple and informal fellowship of the early Christians has developed into a massive ecclesiastical institution. Simple practices have been transformed into elaborate rituals and ceremonials, with a rich elaboration of symbols.

The effects upon Christian education of certain negative aspects of these developments in historic Christianity during nineteen centuries were far-reaching. Christ, as we have seen, placed great emphasis upon the present in which God is creatively at work. The historic church, through the refocusing of its attention, placed its primary emphasis upon the past with its authoritative tradition, on the one hand, and upon a future life for which the present was chiefly a preparation, on the other. Christ trusted experience as valid in itself, and as containing within itself the profoundest potential spiritual values. The historic church, distrustful of contemporary experience, has tended to appeal to an authori-

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ty outside experience. Christ was concerned above all else with the decisions and commitments which living persons make with reference to the issues of the common life in which men are bound by spiritual ties of divine-human relations. The historic church has been preoccupied with the heritage of the past and has been chiefly concerned to recover and transmit that heritage.

For this reason, which in retrospect it is easy to understand and which through the operation of the influences we have traced seems to have been inevitable, the teaching of the Bible, of doctrine, and of the history of the church tended to become ends in themselves rather than means for the illumination and guidance of living persons in meeting the concrete issues of contemporary living. In this the educational practice of the church followed closely the course of general education which, until quite recently, taught language, mathematics, and history as ends in themselves rather than as means which culture has developed for communication, for managing the quantitative aspects of experience, and for understanding the participation of living persons in an ongoing process of cultural change.

This reorientation of the educational ideals of the historic church was the normal outgrowth of social and psychological processes. Like any other his-

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toric event, it is something to be understood rather than to be condemned. Furthermore, such an understanding of the transformation of Christian education through the intervening centuries must not lessen our appreciation of what the church has accomplished through its educational ministry. The story of the educational work of the church through nineteen centuries constitutes one of the most impressive and significant chapters in its history. It is to the credit of the educational consciousness of the church that it is sensitive to the changed conditions of our generation and eager to re-examine its fundamental assumptions and procedures in the light of history and of the spiritual demands of our time. In no aspect of the life and thought of the church has greater progress been made than in its educational endeavors during the last half-century.

Moreover, it should be remembered that our own generation is subject to historical limitations comparable to those that have shaped the educational ideals of preceding generations. We have much to learn from their experience. However sincere and eager our efforts may be to make Christian education more Christian, there is no doubt that those who follow us will conceive their task differently, discarding many ideas and procedures that seem valid and important to us.

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This problem created by the fortunes of history is not unique in our time. Jesus faced the same problem in dealing with a religion that had passed from an immediate experience of God into an institutional phase dominated by tradition. God, he said, "is not the God of dead men but of living!"¹⁷ Like Isaiah who had passed through the same experience before him, he warned, "You have nullified what God has said, for the sake of what has been handed down to you."¹⁸ For us, as for him, the living God is not to be found in the historic creeds of the church, or in its liturgies, or even in the literature of the Bible, however precious. Like the smoldering ashes of the campfires of Evangeline's lover, these mark the places in history where God has been. But if we would find the living God, we must look for him where Jesus found him—in the living experience of living men confronted with the realities of the present world, where men hope and fear, where they strive and suffer, where the creative forces of life are as much at work as in any historic period, and where history is in the making.

IV

Modern Christian education after nineteen cen-

¹⁷ Matt. 22:32.

¹⁸ Matt. 15:6.

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turies is seeking to bring the ideals and purposes of Christ back into functional relation to the experience of growing persons and of the Christian community. By a functional relation of religion to experience is meant the effective operation of religion within experience in the service of the higher spiritual ends in the life of persons and groups. In this functioning, religion serves ends in the spiritual life of man comparable to ends served by the hand or eye in his physical organism. Religion is not something added to human experience. It is an integral part of man's experience and operates within his experience to shape and direct it toward spiritual ends, as is set forth in detail in the following chapter.¹⁹ From a functional approach, Christian education seeks to accomplish under the conditions of contemporary life what it believes Christ sought to accomplish under the conditions of his world—to bring living persons into a vital experience of the Christian values of life. It raises the question whether Christian education that fails to accomplish this end can really be Christian. It is deeply convinced that the Bible may be "taught" as history and literature, that sermons may be preached from texts after the most approved

¹⁹ Readers who are not familiar with the concept of function as applied to religion may wish at this point to refer to chap. II, especially the first part.

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exegetical and homiletic manner, that ceremonials may be punctiliously performed and yet nothing of real religious significance may happen. The test of Christian education, as of preaching and evangelism, is whether growing persons and groups have been helped to achieve loyalty to Christ and a Christian quality of life. To this end the use of the resources of the Christian tradition may be of incalculable value. But if they are the ends sought rather than the means, or if Christian education stops with the mere transmission of tradition, it falls short of being Christian.

It is this conviction and this intention that lie back of the formulation of the objectives, the content, and the method of modern Christian education.

The objectives of modern Christian education may be stated in terms of four fundamental purposes. The first is to help growing persons, through the orientation of the whole self in thought, in attitude, and in motive, to achieve a Christlike personality. The second is to bring the relations and processes that constitute society under the searching criticism and reconstruction of the ideals and purposes of Christ in the progressive realization of the Kingdom of God upon earth. The third is to make available to growing persons and groups who are seeking to become Christian persons in a Christian

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society the funded experience of the Christian past as a resource for interpreting, judging, and resolving the issues which they face in their interaction with their real and present world. The fourth is to build a sustained and sustaining fellowship which is the church, in which are available means for the continued reorientation of one's life, for self-criticism, for the rectification of values, and for wholehearted commitment to Christ and the causes of the Kingdom of God.

It is this attempt to bring the ideals and purposes of Christ into functional relation to experience that lies back of the idea of an experience-centered curriculum of Christian education on which the Protestant churches co-operating through the International Council of Religious Education are now experimentally engaged. Persons and groups become the kind of persons and groups they do become through the experiences they have. Through this approach Christian education becomes a guided experience in facing life situations and in bringing them through to Christian outcomes. The units of learning cease to be blocks of subject matter set in a time schedule, and become units of experience undergoing analysis, appraisal, and redirection in terms of their potential Christian qualities. In dealing with these experiences the Christian tradition—the Bible,

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Christian thought, the historic development of the church, and the rich heritage of symbol and ceremony—becomes a resource upon which to draw for insight, standards, and tested procedures. In this way tradition as a means of meeting life situations assumes vastly greater importance than when “taught” as an end in itself. When brought into functional relation to the experience of living persons and groups the Bible and every other content of our Christian heritage comes alive with meaning and value.

It is this attempt to bring the ideals and purposes of Christ into functional relation to experience that lies back of the use of the creative method in modern Christian education. Instruction and training were appropriate methods when Christian education was conceived as the transmission of an authoritative tradition. They appealed chiefly to the receptive and passive capacities of learners. The burden of responsibility rested primarily upon the teacher. But when growing persons learn through the responsible facing of actual life situations, learning is transformed into inquiry, search, achievement. It involves sensitivity to issues, reflective thinking, weighing possible outcomes, making decisions, and carrying purposes through into action. The center of education shifts from teaching to learning.

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Method becomes creative. Since creative learning so deeply involves values, it takes on by its very nature a religious quality. And since religion is primarily concerned with values, it would seem to follow that no method that is not creative can be fully religious—certainly not if Christ's way of education is any measure of what is Christian.

The attempt to bring the ideals and purposes of Christ into functional relation to experience also lies back of the emphasis which modern Christian education places upon getting beyond verbalization—talking about religion—to action in which actual changes take place in personal and social living. The modern religious educator is convinced that knowledge, which under transmissive forms of education was for the most part thought to be the end of education, is not the end, but only the beginning of learning. Creative Christian education is concerned with the completed act. Ideas and knowledge function in making action intelligent and in guiding it.

A Christian education that conceives its consummation to be in the completed act, by its very nature deeply involves commitment. This is the point at which both general and religious education have been most lacking. Without commitment and whole-souled devotion to ends, education—most

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certainly Christian education—tends to degenerate into sentimentalism and verbalism which, like the tree in the Gospels, has an abundance of leaves, but no fruit.

This, whatever its defects in theory and practice, modern Christian education is seeking to do. After nineteen centuries, modern Christian education is seeking to approximate Christ's way of education by coming to grips with the experience of growing persons where they are face to face with reality, where God is creatively at work in our generation, and where tradition is undergoing reconstruction in the light of emergent insights and growing values.

2

A FUNCTIONAL CONCEPT OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

*I*N THE PRECEDING CHAPTER AN ATTEMPT WAS MADE to understand what modern Christian education is seeking to accomplish. This interpretation was in terms of an effort to bring Christian education back into a functional relation to the experience of living persons and groups. This purpose was placed in contrast with the church's educational program through nineteen centuries during which Christian education was conceived chiefly in terms of recovering and transmitting the end products of historic Christian experience. In its functional approach to its work modern Christian education believes it is closer to the spirit, content, and method of Christ's way of education than traditional education has been. It is now necessary that we inquire

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as to what is involved in a functional concept of Christian education.

I

The functional approach to Christian education rests upon the concept of the functional relation of religion to human experience which characterizes the more recent scientific approach to an understanding of religion. The idea of function, like that of process, has proved to be one of the most fruitful approaches of the modern mind to the understanding of reality. It derives from the biological sciences where it was first used in the study of living organisms. The earlier study of organs, as for example in physiology, was in terms of their structure. Thus the hand was studied for its arrangement of bones, its muscles, and its form. The more recent approach to the study of the hand has been in terms of its function in the human body—of the use it serves a living person. This function is that of reaching for, grasping, and handling the objects of man's immediate environment. It is the fully developed hand that has made possible much of man's achievement and culture. As the derivation of the words suggests, upon the possession of this organ rest man's "manipulation," "handicraft," "manufacture," and "manuscript." One has only by imagination to

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think of man without his hands to realize how large a place the hand has played in his development beyond his animal ancestors. It is the function of manipulation that has determined through the long processes of evolution the structure of the hand with its arrangement of levers, muscles, nerves, and the opposing thumb.

So it is with the eye, the function of which is to extend man's relation through vision to near and distant objects, even to remote parts of stellar space through the assistance of optical instruments. The function of vision determines the structure of the eye with its cornea, its pupil, its lens, its retina, its optic nerve, and its muscles for focusing. So it is with the circulatory, digestive, respiratory, and nervous systems. In the physical organism, function always precedes structure and determines it.

More recently the functional approach has been used with equal fruitfulness in attempting to understand ideas, values, and institutions, such as the family, the state, and the church. All of these serve the ends and needs of persons and of society. Ideas, values, and institutions, like the organs of the human body, have a natural history. Their forms or structures change as their functions change.

In like manner, one of the most revealing insights into the nature of religion is that it sustains a func-

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tional relation to man's experience. It serves needs as basic to his continued existence and well-being as food, air, sight, or hearing. It is deeply rooted in man's essential nature. It, like science, philosophy, technology, and the arts, arises out of man's interaction with his world of reality. It is an inseparable phase of his total culture.

The unmistakable trend in the historical, psychological, and philosophical study of religion since the beginning of the century has been to think of religion as functioning in the realm of values. It is a valuational type of experience. There are, however, many different types of valuational experience. Religion is distinctive in that it has to do with the revaluation of all other values. It is a comprehending form of valuation in which all specialized values—intellectual, economic, social, aesthetic, and moral—are fused and heightened into a total meaning and worth of life in its cosmic setting. Thus, while a religious value is always some other kind of value, it is at the same time more than any specialized value or the mere sum of all specialized values.

It may be said that the functional relation of religion to man's experience is twofold: the integration of personal and social experience on the one hand, and the reconstruction of personal and social experi-

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ence on the other. Both of these functions are in their nature creative.

The history of religion abundantly shows that the roots of religion lie deeply embedded in the practical interests and activities of the common life. It is from this rich and varied soil that the substance of the religious meaning of life is drawn. In fact, the form and content of religious concepts, practices, and institutions are derived from these practical interests and activities. These concepts, practices, and institutions change as the practical interests and activities—the culture—of a people change. Nowhere is this more impressively illustrated than in the changing concept of God among the ancient Hebrews. During the period of their primitive pastoral culture Jahwe was conceived as a tribal deity, moving with the clansmen from one pasture-land to another. During the period of migration and conquest he was thought of as Jahwe of Hosts, a militaristic deity commanding the enslavement of the conquered males and the taking of conquered females as concubines. During the period of settlement on the land and of nation-building he was thought of as Lawgiver and as giving fertility to vineyards and grainfields. In the period of international conflict he came to be thought of as the only living and true God, universal, spiritual, and ethical in nature. In

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the same way this relation might be traced between the changing culture and the ceremonials and institutions of the ancient Hebrews.

This rootage of religious concepts, practices, and institutions in the changing practical interests and activities of the common life of the religious community, as we have seen, is evident on every page of the Old Testament. It is equally evident in the literature of the New Testament which records the changes in Christian concepts, practices, and institutional organizations in relation to the changing interests and activities of the early Christian community. In that literature it is possible to trace the changes in the conception of the meaning of the death and resurrection of Jesus, in the content of the Christian faith, and in the gradual organization of the church as an institution. These changes took place in relation to the interaction of the Christian movement with the Gentile world and to developments within the movement itself, resulting from the shift of the movement from Jewish to Gentile soil. This same rootage of religious concepts, practices, and institutions in the changing life of the Christian community is evident in the subsequent development of Christian history, as these changes find expression in the development of the doctrine of the Incarnation, the doctrine of the Trinity, the

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doctrine of the Atonement, and the doctrine of the church. In no period of Christian history have these changes been greater than those that are taking place before our own eyes, as is shown, for example, in the current struggle of theology with the concept of the nature of God in the light of the facts concerning the universe as disclosed by science. Christian concepts have changed, and are still changing, because the experience of the Christian community has been involved in changes in the areas of intellectual, social, economic, political, and moral interests and activities in the common life of which it is a part.

It is clear, therefore, that it is of the utmost importance to make a distinction between the working of religion in human experience and the ideas, practices, and institutions through which that working finds expression. That is to say, a distinction is to be made between the *function* of religion and the *structures* of ideas, practices, and institutional arrangements. This is the same distinction that needs to be made between the function of the hand, which is manipulation, and the structure of the hand, which consists of bones, muscles, nerves, and blood vessels. It is easy to make this distinction in the case of the hand; it is more difficult to make it in the case of religion. Nevertheless, the distinction is as real and as important in the case of religion as in the case of

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the hand. It is as great an error to identify theology, ceremonial, and the church with the function of religion as it is to identify the bones, muscles, nerves, and blood vessels of the hand with the function which the hand performs in the human body. Notwithstanding, this is a common error on the part of religious persons. As a result, they are likely to be greatly disturbed when religious ideas change, when certain traditional practices give place to new ones, and when the church changes certain features of its organization and procedures in response to new demands. As history has so often demonstrated, if religion is to perform its vital function in personal and social living, these expressions and instruments of religion must change in order to make room for new insights, new possibilities, and new extensions of religion as a vital and dynamic factor in human experience. Instead of being concerned because these expressions and instruments of a vital religious life change, we should be disturbed when they do not change. When these structures of religion lose their capacity to change as experience changes, they are likely to interfere with the free and full functioning of religion as the living core of fundamental and enduring values—such a core as gathers up into itself all the particular values of the practical interests and activities of our common life, and sets them in

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the perspective of our responsible relation to God as the ultimate ground and meaning of life.

On the other hand, once these isolated and particular values are integrated into a total meaning and worth of life in terms of its responsible relation to God, every particular interest and activity of life is brought under searching cross-criticism and reconstruction. Thus religion re-enters every relation and process of living to judge, to reorient, and to rectify it in terms of what a person or a people believes to be the will of God. Thus religion, at the level of experience, is a quality of life. An experience is Christian when it is interpreted, judged, and carried through to action in terms of its relation to Christ and his ideals and purposes as the highest expression of the will of God. It is unchristian to the degree that its ends are pursued without reference to these ideals and purposes or in violation of them. It is a fundamental characteristic of secularism that life falls apart into interests and activities pursued with reference to unrelated values without orientation toward or subjection to the will of God. A Christian person is one who seeks, however imperfectly, sincerely and consistently to orient his life toward Christ and these fundamental and enduring values, and who is committed to them. They are not only integral to but regulative of his habits, his senti-

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ments, his attitudes, and his purposes. A religious education that issues in anything less than this cannot be considered Christian.¹

II

If through the processes of education religion is to be brought into functional relation to the experience of living persons, it is necessary to have an understanding of the nature and origin of experience as well as of its structure. Fortunately, thanks to the psychological and social sciences, this is now possible as it was not in earlier times. It is now clear that all experience is the outgrowth of the interaction of the living person with his objective world. This interaction involves two dynamic factors—man as a dynamic creature who is in the process of becoming and a dynamic world that is also in the process of becoming. The relationship between man and his world, as a result, is itself dynamic and may be creative if brought under the control of intelligence and purpose. It may also be religious if the interaction is oriented toward the comprehending and integrated values that unite all the particular values that are involved in the inter-

¹ For a more detailed discussion of the functional concept of religion, see the author's chapter on "A Functional Concept of Religion," chap I, in *Faith of the Free*, W. E. Garrison, editor (Chicago: Willett, Clark & Co., 1940).

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action into a total meaning and worth of life in its relation to total reality. It may be Christian if this unification is achieved in terms of loyalty to Christ and his ideals and purposes and the growing values of the historic Christian movement. It is at this point of interaction that God and man have sought and found each other through the eventful centuries. It is here, in the present moment of history, that living men and women will find God if they find him at all. It is here, where the human spirit is in immediate relationship with reality, rather than in tradition, that religion becomes a vital and poignant experience.

Man brings to his world desires and needs that are deeply implanted in his being. Some of these are elemental, irrational, and shared with the lower forms of organic life. Some of them are distinctively human with a capacity for indefinite expansion. They are rational and capable of discipline, refinement, and organization into a hierarchy of desires, the achievement of the human spirit. Because of these desires, man's attitude toward his objective world is active, forthreaching, controlling. His desires invest the objects of his environing world with value. These values set the ends for which he strives and furnish the motivation for his effort. It

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is these values that give meaning, worth, and dignity to his existence.

The dynamic world which man confronts as a living person is a very complex world. It consists in part of the objects and processes of nature. The natural sciences, with their highly specialized sub-fields, give us some indication of the complexity of the network of natural forces in which our life is enmeshed and by which it is conditioned. Beyond the immediate natural world are unimaginable extensions of the forces of nature into astronomical space. The vastly extended stellar universe, so far as it can be measured by the ingenious instruments of man's devising, is one hundred and fifty million light years in diameter. The indications are that at the moment it is rapidly expanding. It would be naïve and superficial to think that man's relation to his natural world is limited to the immediate scene. Forces like gravitation, light, and the cosmic rays are at every moment exerting their unconscious influence upon him. In the most elemental physical aspects of his life man is a cosmic creature.

Man's objective world is also social. It consists of other persons like himself to whom he is bound by innumerable relationships, interests, needs, and a common ancestry. Personality itself is a social product, the result of the interaction of an emergent self

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with other emergent selves. But the individual's relation to his fellows is not to other persons in isolation, but to other persons in an associated life in groups, institutions, races, and cultures. The sum of these associations constitute society. In primitive stages of culture these associations were relatively simple and limited to small groups. But the movement of civilized life has been to larger and larger groupings around more inclusive interests, functions, and loyalties. In our day man's associated life has become planetary, as is being tragically demonstrated.

Man's objective world is also a world of culture. All of his ideas, values, techniques, sentiments, and institutions have their origin in his interaction with his world. His insights, ways of doing things, and institutional arrangements are in their nature cumulative. Once the nuclei of culture are formed, they absorb into themselves each new discovery, each new technique, each new modification of social structure. Consequently, while these accumulations of past experience that constitute our culture are growing, they are also changing. Even the natural and social aspects of the objective world are overlaid and conditioned by this cultural inheritance. The child is born into this world of culture. All his relations to nature and society are colored and modified by socially inherited interpretations and atti-

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tudes. Through his interaction with the world and his participation in it, his own ideas, ways of living, and values are unconsciously but effectively formed. He acquires his way of life much as his "mother tongue," by unconscious assimilation.

Moreover, the reality with which man interacts is, from the religious point of view, personal. Science has disclosed a universe that operates according to uniformities and "laws" that are amenable only to thought. For centuries the recognition of this fact has led the religious mind to believe that running through the structures and processes of the universe and working in it is a Supreme Intelligence. History seems to abound in evidence that the order and structure of reality is moral. That is to say, it is an order of values. But, so far as our experience goes, intelligence and values are functions only of persons. The religious mind is convinced, therefore, that there is something personal at the heart of reality. And when to these considerations is added the further fact that reality has produced persons, the religious mind concludes with added certainty that it is personal. To the religious mind, this aspect of reality, however it may be conceived, is the Supreme Person, God. Consequently, man's interaction with total reality involves an interaction with an objectively real God.

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Now Christian education functionally conceived seeks to enable growing persons and groups to become vividly aware of this interaction with their world in its several aspects, to make intelligent decisions in regard to the issues involved, and to commit themselves to outcomes that are in their essential nature Christian in spirit and motive. This cannot be achieved by attempting to deal with experience in general. Experiences are concrete and specific. Moreover, when an experience is analyzed, it discloses a structure or pattern. It is this structure that makes it possible to get hold of the experience and effect changes in it, thus rendering an experience that is only potentially Christian into one that is genuinely Christian.

The structure of an experience is not simple, but its outlines are clear. It consists of a response that is being made to a situation. It is, however, never static as though a fixed response were made to a fixed situation. Both situation and response are dynamic and to be thought of in terms of process. Some are very simple and the response is automatic, as in the adjustment of the pupil of the eye to degrees of light. Others are relatively simple and the response is ready at hand, having been laid down in the forgotten habit-patterns of the species, as in food, sex, and defense behavior. Others are ex-

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tremely complex, involving a delay between the situation and the response which is filled up with reflective thought, weighing of alternative courses of action, and the trying out of solutions. These complex situations are the ones that have the greatest educational importance and to the extent that they involve values are rich in religious possibilities. It is in the kind of response that is made to a situation that its Christian quality inheres. It is at this point that an experience becomes Christian or otherwise. It is at this point that the fatal error may be made of substituting a mere knowledge of the Christian tradition or even of the Bible for thinking, decisions, and commitment.

III

With this structure of an experience before us, it will be helpful to examine the way in which functional Christian education proceeds in seeking to help persons and groups resolve their situations into Christian outcomes. This is perhaps best done by stating the procedure in terms of the steps involved in dealing with situations creatively and religiously.

1. Helping persons become aware of the situations they face in the various areas of their living—in the family, in the school, in the church, in economic activities, in civic and political responsibilities,

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in leisure-time pursuits, in the enjoyment and creation of beauty. Perhaps this may best be accomplished through a social analysis of all the relations and functions in which the person is involved. Unless such an analysis is made, one is apt to overlook certain important areas of experience which are then left without criticism and reconstruction. Many of the crucial issues are passed over without one's being aware of their presence or importance because ready-to-hand solutions are taken over without reflection. Some of the most crucial situations are even depressed below the level of consciousness because one is not willing to face them. This is especially true of issues involving status or self-interest.

2. Clarifying the issue or issues involved in a given situation. This is the prerequisite of clear thinking, decision, and commitment. Those situations that are relatively simple and routine may well be resolved without elaborate treatment and relegated to the realm of habit. Those that involve fundamental issues will require careful study and perhaps a long-time solution. Some are so crucial that, as in the choice of a vocation, the whole future of one's life may depend upon the decision.

3. Analysis of the situation for its factors, on the one hand, and for its possible outcomes, on the other. A situation may be mishandled because one fails

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to see as many as possible of the factors that are involved or seize upon the non-essential ones. Many situations are oversimplified because one fails to see as many as possible of their possibilities and thus limits the range of choice.

4. The use of all available sources of knowledge, without which any action is unintelligent. All existing knowledge represents the funded experience of the past. To it we of our generation may turn for facts, insights, techniques, and standards by which to interpret, judge, and direct our present experience. When this funded experience of the past, handed down from generation to generation as a precious tradition, is used as containing the means for the interpretation and management of present experience, it may best be thought of as a resource. By such use as a resource, knowledge and the rich content of tradition are set in a new relation to learning. Knowledge and tradition cease to be ends in themselves and become the indispensable means for the interpretation and control of present experience. More, not less, is made of knowledge when it is thus functionally used than when it is directly "taught." The past is no longer inert, but comes alive with meaning.

5. Weighing of every discoverable outcome in the light of Christian values and the making of a

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definite choice of that which seems most clearly to conform to a Christian judgment. Such a choice is made with action in view and involves commitment. It is the point at which thinking moves over the line of verbalization into the realm of action.

6. The actual trying out of the decision. It is in the completed act that the soundness of one's thinking and the validity of one's choice are tested. Freedom of action and responsibility for decisions are the conditions of growth in competency in meeting and responding to the demands of life upon one. Thus, in the profoundest sense, knowing is a function of doing. This seems to have been what Christ had in mind when he said that if one willed to do he would know.

7. The seventh step is consummatory. It consists of the integration of each particular choice, commitment, and action into the whole system of attitudes, sentiments, and habits of the whole self. It is through an infinite number of such choices and commitments that one achieves an orientation of his whole self toward Christ and the way of life that found supreme expression in him. It is through the integration of such acts that enduring and effective habit-patterns and attitudes are fashioned into a way of life. The crowning result is a Christlike person.

It is throughout this process of resolving situa-

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tions that those appreciations and attitudes involved in worship arise. Values vividly experienced call for adequate expression through symbols, praise, thanksgiving, prayer, penitence, communion, or silent contemplation within the inner sanctuary of the soul. But when set in the frame of commitment and action, worship is more than praise and communion. It is a girding for the issue of the experience in action. It lays hold upon that divine resource of strength beyond the self needed for courageous and sustained effort. Vital worship rises, like the tides, out of the depths of experience where in the presence of reality one looks upon the face of God.²

IV

In view of the large place that the subject matter of the great traditions occupies in any education, religious or secular, it is appropriate that it should be the subject of more extended remarks. These great traditions, as has already been pointed out, are the carriers of the funded experience of the past, handed down, as the word itself suggests, from generation to generation. They represent the great bodies of knowledge—scientific, literary, historical,

² For a more detailed analysis of the nature and structure of experience and the steps of creative method, see the author's *Character Through Creative Experience* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1930).

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economic, artistic, philosophical, technological, religious—which together represent our cultural inheritance. In traditional education these traditions have been regarded as the subject matter of education. In a functional approach they still remain an important part of the subject matter of learning, but by no means the only part—perhaps not even the most important part. From the viewpoint of functional education the unit of learning is a unit of experience, moving from a situation to a completed response. When viewed in this light, subject matter takes on a wider range and richer content. It consists not only of the situation itself, but of all that enters into the resolution of the situation.

Specifically, when a unit of experience is analyzed it breaks down into three elements, though they overlap and flow together as phases of a single process. These three elements are:

1. The situation itself in all its richness of detail. To the discerning mind even the simplest event involves elements that outrun the imagination, as in the case of the atom under the analysis of the physicist. Every situation has its antecedents that ramify into the past so that it is impossible fully to understand it except in its causal relations. Likewise it has its implications that reach out in every direction and into the future. Dr. Gildersleeve used

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to say that it did not much matter where one started; if all the implications of an experience were followed out, one would reach the limits of the known universe. This is what Tennyson had in mind:

Flower in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies;—
Hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
Little flower—but if I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and man is.

We have yet to learn how to look at the life situations in which we find ourselves in our common life and to see them in the height and depth and breadth of their meaning. They are the vessels in which the precious treasure of life itself is borne, freighted with meaning, with values, and with destiny. They are the creative moments of our existence. On the decisions that are made within their compass depend the issues of life, not only for individuals, but for groups and nations. In any appraisal of the content of experience, the situation as it actually exists takes precedence.

This estimate of the primary importance of the existing moment in experience is emphasized by the thesis that the present is the place in which reality is located. According to this thesis, the existing

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moment is the only reality there is. The past is not, as is commonly assumed, something existing "out there" as a region to be explored and charted by the historian. The only past there is lives on in the present as it survives in extant documents, monuments, archeological remains, institutions, and social habits. It is out of these remains that the historian reconstructs the past in terms of the interests and values that are operative in contemporary experience. This is why history has to be rewritten in successive generations that present new perspectives in which to interpret the relics of the past. Similarly, there is no future "out there" as though it were an existent realm that could be explored. The future exists only as it is implicit in the present. Thus the present is a narrow moment of time with a fringe of memory and a fringe of anticipation—a moment so limited in its extent that while we think of it, it has already passed into the emergent future, bearing within itself the living-on-ness of the past. This existing moment has always been and is now the creative moment of reality. It is in this ever forward-moving moment of the living present that the past reaches its fulfillment and the shape of things to come is fashioned.

2. The past experience of the growing person or group. This element consists of the funded ex-

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perience of all one's past interaction with his natural, social, cultural, and cosmic world. It is at once a resource and a liability. In so far as it represents knowledge, insight, and effective skills, it is a resource. The most competent knowledge and skill in the world is that of the expert. But, aside from being limited in range and depth, this personal past experience is very mixed. It also contains erroneous information, conditionings, emotional slants, prejudices. To this extent it is a liability. If knowledge, insight, and skill lead to the effective management of a situation, one's misinformation, prejudices, and lack of skill lead to its mishandling. In spite of all that the Herbartians made of the "apperceptive mass," not enough attention has been given to this second element of the subject matter of an experience. Its creative use requires discrimination, criticism, and selection. The more recent studies of human behavior have made us more than ever aware of the way one's past experience affects his behavior, even below the level of consciousness.

3. The vast, accumulated, and systematized stores of racial experience. This is the substance of the great traditions of science, literature, technology, philosophy, religion, and the arts. In religion it consists of the Bible, theology, the church as an institution, ceremonials, symbols—all those elements

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that constitute the heritage of our religious past. It is the Christian tradition.³

This funded experience of the Christian past, like one's personal Christian experience, is mixed. It must, therefore, be used with discrimination, criticism, and selection. Its knowledge is not unmixed with error. Its insights are not unclouded by emotional conditionings and prejudices. Some of its ideas and practices are primitive, prescientific, and immature. Through the course of an evolving history many ideas and practices that were once felt to be of the greatest importance have been discarded with the emergence of truer insights and the testing of experience. When one scans the pages of Christian history, he is as much impressed with the continuous change that has characterized Christian thought as with its continuity. For this reason every generation of the continuing Christian community has reinterpreted its heritage of faith in the light of new knowledge and wider experience. For the same reason it is incumbent upon the living generation of Christians to re-examine and reappraise its formulations of faith, its religious practices, and its institutional arrangements. A religious educa-

³ For an earlier extended discussion of the content of a curricular unit and the relation of racial experience to it, see the author's *The Curriculum of Religious Education* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925).

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tion that fails to do this in a creative and constructive manner is less than Christian in the truly historic sense. Christ did this in a pre-eminent manner in regard to his own religious heritage, and promised to his disciples that "when the Spirit of Truth comes, he will guide you into the full truth."⁴ It is not without significance that this promise of Christ is reported by John in the Fourth Gospel, which is itself primary documentary evidence of the reinterpretation of Christian faith on the part of the early Christian community through its interaction with Greek and Oriental philosophic thought in the opening years of the second century.

When this funded experience of the Christian past is viewed as a resource for dealing with the existing moment in experience, its precious value is incalculable. It records the past out of which the present Christian community has come. The present is inseparable from that past. The past cannot be ignored, because it lives on in the present. It is not a dead past. Apart from it present Christian experience has no meaning or direction. As a resource the function of the Christian tradition is threefold. It is a factor of interpretation. By its standards and values it is possible to weigh and judge present experience. In it are to be found tech-

⁴ John 16:13.

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niques of Christian living that have been tested by long experience. When the Christian tradition is so used its importance becomes much greater than when an attempt is made to transmit it as an end in itself.

It is evident, therefore, that the functional order reverses the three elements of the subject matter of learning. Instead of beginning with tradition which by pedagogical devices was related to previous learning and ending by looking about for opportunities for the "application" of what had been learned, the functional order begins with the experience of the living person confronted by life situations. It takes account of the learner's own equipment of insights, attitudes, and skills. It then searches diligently for every relevant resource of funded historical Christian experience. It ends in experience where it began, in an intelligently purposed act. As important as they are, knowledge and tradition yield to life as the determinative factor in Christian education. In this, modern Christian education seeks to take its stand with Christ.

Thus Christian education functionally conceived looks in two directions in dealing with tradition—backward to its functional origin and forward to its functional use. As has already been suggested, every component element of Christian tradition had

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its origin in what was once a present, indeterminate life situation in which issues were faced, alternatives weighed, and decisions made. As we shall see in the next chapter, this is the way in which every fragment of what is now our Bible arose. In the same way the great doctrines of historical theology grew out of the church's experience—the doctrines of God and of the nature of man, the doctrine of sin and salvation, the doctrine of the person of Christ, the doctrine of immortality. Theology is most truly understood as the intellectual reflection of the church upon Christian experience and as the attempt to organize these interpretations into a logically consistent system of thought.

The great Christian doctrines grew out of conflict situations requiring the definition, clarification, and defense of points of view in an effort to establish an authentic body of Christian belief. One recalls, for example, the Council at Jerusalem in the first century when the issue was laid before the apostles as to whether the Gentiles should be admitted to the church without first becoming Jews, as Paul had preached in his missionary labors in Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Achaia; or whether they should first become Jews, as the Judaizing party in Jerusalem insisted. In retrospect we now know that the whole future course of historic Christianity de-

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pended upon the decision of that Council. One also recalls the vivid illustration of this process in the long and bitter controversy against the Arians in the fourth century regarding the person of Christ. The issue of that controversy centered upon whether the word *homoousion* or *homoiousion* should be used to designate the relation of the Son to the Father in the Trinity—whether the Son was the *same* substance or of *like* substance with the Father. The outcome of that controversy was the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity in which it was held that the Son and the Holy Spirit are of the same substance as the Father. These illustrations might be multiplied indefinitely.

The symbols and ceremonials of the church had the same origin in the developing experience of the Christian community. In this manner the cross was transformed from an embarrassing object of shame into the glorious central symbol of Christian faith. In the same way the simple memorial of the Last Supper became the elaborate mass of the Catholic Church. The church itself began as a fellowship, but by the time the Gospel of Matthew was written this fellowship had already begun to develop the structure of an institution which in the later centuries became a massive organization supported by a sacramental conception of its nature.

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One has but to turn the pages of Christian history to realize how these doctrines, ceremonials, and institutions have undergone changes in both form and content—always in relation to new situations which the Christian community has faced in a changing historic culture. Thus, for example, the doctrine of the Atonement, as the late Shailer Mathews has shown, again and again has been reformulated in relation to changing social and cultural patterns throughout the centuries. Nor are these changes in Christian thought confined to the remote past. In our own generation these changes are going on as we adjust our thinking to the findings of science, technology, and new social experiments. In our day, as in the days of our fathers in the faith, the Christian tradition is undergoing re-examination and reinterpretation in the light of new experience. We, like them, under the conditions of a changed and changing world live and think and work at the growing edge of historic Christianity where it discloses undreamed-of possibilities that outrun any period of history, and where it takes on new directions and new qualities as it moves into an uncharted future. There are still depths and heights of meaning in the Christian gospel which no age in the past has exhausted and which our own age will not exhaust. It is in this moment of the forward-

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moving present that God always has been and is now creatively at work.

It is this functional origin of our Christian tradition that makes possible its functional use in understanding and dealing with our own experience in Christian ways. While much is new in our experience, there is much we share in common with Christians of all ages. Our deepest needs and yearnings as human beings have not fundamentally changed. Consequently, our Christian past with its Bible, its convictions, and its ways of life have much to say to us, the living representatives of the Christian movement, as we seek to find the Christian meaning and way of life under the changed and changing conditions of our time. By such a functional use of the resources of our Christian past, tradition is subordinated to a living experience of God. It becomes an instrument of growth into Christlike personality. By such a use we find ourselves seeking to do what Christ did—to bring ourselves face to face with the realities of living, to have faith in life as the good gift of God, to have a fresh and vivid experience of God through the mediation of the common life, to discover in every experience the qualities that spring from the deepest spiritual values, and thus to commit ourselves to Christ and his cause. Nothing less than this is Christian education.

3

THE BIBLE IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

IN NO PHASE OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION IS THE functional approach more important, from both an educational and a religious point of view, than in the use of the Bible. Perhaps in no other constituent element of our Christian tradition is the relation of functional origin to functional use quite so impressively illustrated.¹

I

Historically, the Bible has been the most precious part of our Christian heritage. While this has been true for all of Christendom, it has been especially so for Protestantism, which has regarded the Bible as

¹ A full-length discussion of the functional origin and use of the Bible will be found in the author's *The Living Bible* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1936).

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the basis of authority for both faith and conduct. For more than a half century the Bible was practically the sole content of American Christian education and in most of the Protestant churches it still remains so. Modern religious education, which has increasingly approached its task from a functional point of view during the last quarter of a century, is unequivocal in its emphasis upon the Bible as the incomparable resource for Christian living.

Notwithstanding the great emphasis which Christian education has historically placed upon the Bible, the evidence shows that it has not been as fruitfully used as it should have been. The strong arguments that their advocates made for the International Uniform Lessons, which for seventy years have been used to teach the Bible in the Sunday school in cycles of five to seven years, and which are still the principal dependence for lesson materials in more than half of the Protestant churches, was that they taught the Bible and nothing but the Bible. The principal criticism of the International Graded Lessons was that they used too much extrabiblical material. However, a study made in 1921 showed that during a half century the Uniform Lessons in an attempt to teach the Bible directly had used only one-third of the Bible, with many of the most important portions never touched

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at all. On the other hand, the same study showed that the Graded Lessons in their attempts to meet the needs of children and young people had in the thirteen years following 1908 used two-thirds of the Bible, including much of its most vital and important sections.

Of recent years there has been a growing feeling among ministers, religious educators, and laymen, that the Bible for some time has been falling into disuse, not only in our general culture, but in the Protestant churches. There are no doubt a number of reasons for this regrettable decline. One seems to have been the initial results of the critical and historical study of the Bible by biblical scholars. This is perhaps the inevitable result of the "ground-clearing" phase of modern biblical research, when many false ideas of the Bible needed to be corrected. Another quite obvious reason seems to have been the mountainous multiplication of books in many diverse fields of human interest. But unquestionably the chief reason has been the increasing secularization of modern life with its accompanying materialism and mechanization. Some who have not fully understood the underlying ideals and purposes of a functional Christian education have felt that the emphasis upon experience has led to a disregard of the Bible. But in response to a recent

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inquiry by the author, the testimony has been quite otherwise on the part of some Protestant communions which have been among the most active in working out a program of Christian education in accordance with the experiential philosophy of the International Council of Religious Education and a functional use of the Bible. Of the six considered, four agree that more Bible is being used now than formerly. The largest communion estimates that from fifty to sixty per cent more is used. All are agreed that the Bible is more effectively used because it is related to the living experience of the student. All are agreed that an increasing attempt is being made to give older children, young people, and adults a comprehensive understanding of the Bible as a living literature as distinguished from the use of isolated passages lifted out of their context.

In any event, there is a new and widely-growing interest in the Bible. The work of biblical scholars has passed the initial "ground-clearing" stage. In the light of what is now known concerning the nature and origin of the Bible the minister and religious educator are in a position to make greater and more fruitful use of it than ever before. In this we owe an incalculable debt to the biblical scholars. What they have brought to light re-

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garding the functional origin of the literature of the Bible affords a solid ground for its functional use.

II

The fundamental weakness of the use of the Bible under the older transmissive and authoritative Christian education was that it taught the Bible as the end product of past religious experience. In this, Christian education unconsciously and unintentionally fell into the same error as traditional general education in "teaching" other forms of the great cultural tradition. Until the beginning of the twentieth century, all education was, generally speaking, of the authoritative, disciplinary, and transmissive type.

The reason for this is not difficult to understand. As we saw in the preceding chapter, all the increments of knowledge, technical procedures, and achievements grew out of what was at one time present experience—the facing of specific and concrete situations. In time the nuclei of tradition—or better still, of many traditions—were formed. As new discoveries were made and improvements in ways of doing things were hit upon, these bodies of knowledge and these skills grew into greater and greater bodies of tradition to be handed down from one generation to another. In time these traditions

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became massive accumulations enshrouded with the prestige of social usage and antiquity. In this accumulated form they tended to set patterns for current ideas and practices.

Moreover, with their cumulative character they underwent a transformation in their nature. Whereas their origin had been genetic, in their cumulative form they came to be logically arranged, like the subject matter of the encyclopedia. Thus each science, like physics and biology, was systematically arranged under its several categories, with their several subdivisions. As a result each constituent element of the great tradition—language, the sciences, literature, history, the arts, and religion—confronts us in its cumulative, logically organized, and semi-final form. It is little wonder that education of all types, secular and religious, should have been conceived in terms of the transmission of these massive traditions through processes of “teaching” them as ends in themselves.

It is in this form that the Bible has come down to us. Its literature, as we shall presently see, came into being in small fragments over a period of more than a thousand years, under widely differing conditions, and on many different cultural levels. But as we encounter it in our culture, these fragments have been bound together in one book with a re-

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arrangement which is entirely different from the order in which the several portions arose. Moreover, the Bible has been surrounded with attitudes of reverence and authority that have changed its essential nature as a living literature.

The transformation of the living literature of the ancient Hebrew and early Christian communities into an authoritative Bible grew out of the process of canonization which was traced in the first chapter. Its results have been fourfold. First, the genetic order of the origin of the portions that constitute the Bible was disrupted, and the canonical order that obscures the historic sequence was substituted, as in the placing of the Law before the Prophets in the Old Testament and of the Gospels before the letters of Paul in the New Testament. Second, the living literature became dissociated from the living experience of the continuing Christian community and thus became formal, external, and to that extent unreal. Third, by surrounding the Bible with an aura of ecclesiastical authority its essential nature was changed from a living literature into an official book in which the letter tended to dominate the spirit. Fourth, the Bible became an end product of past religious experience to be "taught" as an end in itself.

Now, at least in the progressive areas of general

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education, we are coming to feel that it is not the business of education to "teach" language, mathematics, science, literature, or the arts as ends in themselves; but rather to provide conditions in which the growing members of society may have the experience of communication, of the quantitative aspects of living, of science as a method of thought, of the values expressed in literature, and of the arts as creative expressions of beauty, through the *use* of language, mathematics, science, literature, and the arts as resources provided by a growing culture for meeting the issues of contemporary living. So in Christian education the Bible as the most precious record of our religious past is coming to be thought of as a resource to be *used* in the interpretation, enrichment, and guidance of a genuinely vital and authentic experience of the living God in contemporary life. By "exalting" the Bible the church has unintentionally devitalized it, and has sometimes unwittingly come dangerously near to substituting literature and history for a vital Christian experience.

III

The literature of the Bible was at the point of its origin the Living Word because it was functionally related to the experience of the ancient Hebrew and

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early Christian communities. Every fragment of that literature is a deposit of an authentic religious experience under concrete historical conditions. In looking into these deposits of many successive epochs it is as though one were descending into the Grand Canyon. In that stupendous spectacle the whole evolution of geologic time is laid bare within the range of vision. There, resting upon the Vishnu schist, which is judged to be 1,500,000,000 years old, are successive strata in which are embedded the remains of life upon this planet—shells, cones, leaves, and the bones of prehistoric animals. The oldest of these strata is judged to have been laid down 600,000,000 years ago. Some of these strata successively have been raised above and submerged below sea level. These deposits are not history. They are the materials by means of which history is written. So there are in the Bible successive cultural and religious strata bearing rich literary deposits by means of which it is possible to reconstruct the spiritual history of the ancient Hebrews and the early Christians, from the primitive levels of the ancient Hebrew clansmen to the exalted spiritual insights of the prophets and of Christ in a dynamic, growing experience of God in history.

This becomes vividly and compellingly clear when we look at selected parts of the literature of the Bible.

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For example, the earliest literary deposit of the Old Testament that has come down to us, with the possible exception of certain fragments like the Song of Deborah and some legal codes and the Judaic source which exists only in the composite legal and narrative material of Genesis-to-Kings, consists of the writings of the eighth century prophets—Amos, Hosea, Micah, and the first Isaiah. Their messages grew directly out of the conflict between the religion and culture of the invading Hebrew clansmen and the religion and culture of the Canaanitish Amorites. The invading Hebrews brought with them the religion of Jahwe embedded in a tribal culture with a pastoral economy. The heart of their religion and culture was the idea of Mishpat—social justice founded upon brotherhood. Theirs was a two-class society consisting of Hebrews and slaves taken in conquest. Because he was a blood brother, in the more primitive forms of the Jahwistic culture, no Hebrew could enslave a Hebrew. Land was held in common and could not be bought or sold. On the other hand, the Amorites had a culture based upon territory and private property. They were an agricultural people with trade routes to distant sources of wealth. Through trade private wealth accumulated, mostly in cities which were walled to protect it. Theirs was a three-class society with a

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few wealthy landowning lords (baals) at the top, with a slave class at the bottom, and with a middle class between the two. As is customary with the concentration of wealth, the rich lived in luxury and exploited the poor. Consequently, while a few from the middle class could through the acquisition of wealth rise into the class of landowning lords, many were forced by debt and poverty down into the slave class.

Gradually the conquering Hebrews took over the culture and religion of the conquered Amorites with the result that the Jahwistic religion and culture with justice based upon brotherhood was in great danger of being not only corrupted, but swamped. It was against this danger and because of this conflict that the eighth century prophets delivered their flaming messages. In fact, it is impossible to read these prophets intelligently except against this background, as these passages from Amos show:

For the three transgressions of Israel,
And for the four, I will not turn it [the invasion] back;
Because they have sold the innocent for silver,
And the needy in exchange for a pair of sandals;
They who trample upon the heads of the poor,
And thrust aside the humble from the way. . . .
Garments taken in pledge they spread out
Beside every altar.²

² Amos 2:6-8.

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And I will smite both winter house and summer house,
And the ivory houses shall be ruined.³

Woe to them who are at ease in Zion,
And self-confident on the mount of Samaria. . . .
They who lie upon ivory couches,
And stretch themselves out upon divans;
And eat lambs from the flock,
And calves from the midst of the stall; . . .
They who drink chalices of wine,
And anoint themselves with the finest oils;
But they are not heart-sick over the ruin of Joseph.⁴

Or these from Micah:

What is Jacob's transgression?
Is it not Samaria?
And what is Judah's sin?
Is it not Jerusalem? ⁵

Woe to them who devise wrong . . .
They covet fields and seize them,
And houses, and carry them off.
So they crush a yeoman and his house,
A man and his possessions.⁶

For the sake of a mere trifle,
You take a heavy mortgage.⁷

³ Amos 3:15.

⁴ Amos 6:1, 4, 6.

⁵ Micah 1:5.

⁶ Micah 2:1, 2.

⁷ Micah 2:10.

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Or this from Isaiah:

Woe to you who join house to house,
And add field to field,
Till there is no more room,
And you are left to dwell alone
In the midst of the land! ⁸

One has but to read these prophets against these economic and religious backgrounds to realize that out of this conflict of social and religious ideals grew the lofty ethical monotheism of Judaism which furnished the spiritual foundations of the ethical teaching of Jesus and the Christianity that sprang from him.

Did time permit, it would be equally possible to see how the narrative and legal writings of Genesis-to-Kings grew out of the desire of the northern and southern Hebrew kingdoms to recover the nation's past from oral tradition and how these traditions were refashioned to include the Deuteronomic Law of Josiah's reformation and the ritualistic provisions by priests in exile, so that these writings assumed their present form only in the late fifth century B.C., although they stand at the beginning of our canonized Bible. So also we would see how the Psalms with their moods of despair, their cry

⁸ Isaiah 5:8.

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for divine help, and their exaltation, well up out of the depths of actual human experience involving crises. We would also see how Job is a religious-philosophical wrestling with the age-old problem of suffering, and how Ecclesiastes reflects the pessimism resulting from the starless night that descended upon the nation during its late history—perhaps as late as the second century before Christ.

The same functional relation of the literature of the Bible to the experience of the early Christians is seen when we turn to the New Testament. The first Christian writing we have consists of the letters of Paul. They were, as we have seen, letters which the great missionary to the Gentiles wrote to the churches he had planted in the Greco-Roman world. They dealt with the immediate practical problems of relations within the churches and with the relations of the churches to the surrounding pagan culture. The only exception—the letter to the Romans—was written in preparation for a contemplated journey to Rome on the way to Spain. It is a mistake to think of Paul primarily as a theologian; his interests were practical. His letters grew out of the evangelistic passion of the early Christian fellowship.

The Gospels also grew out of the same evangelistic passion. They were preaching materials.

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When one has this insight, he quickly senses the different audiences in the pagan Gentile world to which they were addressed in an effort to make disciples of all nations. This purpose determined the selection and organization of Jesus' acts and sayings and the placement of emphasis in each of the Gospels.

In order to read Revelation aright one must sense the bitter persecution to which the early Christians were subjected and the courage which the hope of final triumph gave them. One must feel the flagging zeal of second-generation Christians before he can appreciate the book of Hebrews and its argument for the superiority of Christianity over Judaism.

It is when the Bible is understood and felt in its functional relation to the changing experience of the ancient Hebrew and early Christian communities that it comes alive and is indeed the Living Word.

IV

The Bible becomes the Living Word for us only as it is brought into functional relation to our own experience as living members of the continuing Christian community in the contemporary world. Like all ideas, values, and symbols, the Bible, having arisen in the stream of living experience, does not fulfill its function merely by becoming the inert end

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product of past religious experience. It reaches its functional fulfillment when it again re-enters experience as a means of interpretation, enrichment, and control.

If one asks how the Bible is to be brought into a functional relation to the present experience of living persons, a number of considerations suggest themselves. These grow directly out of the nature and origin of the Bible, on the one hand, and out of the nature and structure of experience as analyzed in the second chapter, on the other.

1. We must begin with people where they are in their interaction with their real and present world rather than with the canonized Bible, which is a deposit of past religious living. The Christian life consists, not in recovering and reproducing the experience of Christians in other historic periods, but in achieving a Christian quality of experience for ourselves. This means facing the issues of life as they are concretely set by the situations which life in our own time presents. That is precisely what our fathers in the faith did, as the records of the Bible abundantly show. That is what we must do if religion is to be a vital experience and not a mere repetition of tradition. That experience, as we have seen, arises out of our interaction with our natural, social, and cultural world, set in the widely

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extended context of cosmic relations. Specifically, it means responding to situations involving issues that call for decision and action. An experience is Christian when it is interpreted, analyzed for factors and outcomes, resolved, and carried through to the completed act in the light of Christian values and motives. The Bible then becomes a resource to which we may turn for insight, knowledge, techniques, and standards to guide us in our search for the Christian solution of life's problems.

2. In order to avail ourselves of the resources of the Bible, it is necessary to rearrange the assembled parts of its literature according to their genetic origin by distributing its several portions along the time span of more than a thousand years. The Bible is not a book but a library consisting of sixty-six literary documents. Some of these documents are of the proportion of pamphlets, some the size of tracts, and some no larger than leaflets.

But once the distribution is made, it becomes necessary to reconstruct the historical, cultural, and social situations out of which the various portions grew. Only then can the Bible speak to us its true message. Failing to do this, whatever other help we may desire, we incur the danger that has so often been manifest of allegorizing the Bible, of seeing its growing religious insights only on a dead

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level of significance and validity, and above all of reading our own ideas and wishes into it. In so doing we speak to it rather than let it speak to us, thus, as has sometimes happened, seeking in it sanction for our desires and prejudices. In any case, we wrest the Scriptures out of their essential nature as a revelation of God in history. This historic past out of which the Bible grew, thanks to the patient work of biblical scholars, is a matter of knowledge accessible to any intelligent Christian who is sufficiently in earnest to seek the facts. But the reconstruction of the past is also a matter of the creative imagination that clothes historical facts with the flesh and blood of living men facing the issues of life in their times and searching with the help of divine guidance for the religious way of life. To understand the messages of these ancient portions of the Bible, we must not only know the historical facts concerning the conditions out of which they arose, but we must actually imaginatively *live through* these situations by feeling the tensions, the issues involved, and the ideas and attitudes that lay back of the outcomes.

3. When, however, we have reconstructed the historical situations out of which the various parts of the literature of the Bible grew, we come upon the third consideration—the selective use of the Bible.

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There is much in the Bible that is not relevant to our life in the modern world. Many concepts and practices may have been valid because they served a useful purpose under conditions which existed at the time. But conditions have changed. It would be futile to try to understand the nature of the physical universe as revealed by modern science under the thought forms of primitive Hebrew clansmen who regarded the earth as flat and as created by fiat in six days. Modern scientific medicine is too busy with its research into the cause and cure of specific diseases to consult the ancient sanitary laws of the Jews. In our day one does not see priests sprinkling water containing the ashes of a red heifer for ceremonial cleansing. One does not attempt to defend the militaristic concept of God as commanding the conquering army to destroy the whole people or to take the men as slaves and the women as concubines. These are only a few obvious examples of limited, datable, pre-Christian ideas and attitudes that belong to the remote past and are no longer tenable or useful in contemporary Christian living. Jesus himself was careful to make a distinction between the obsolete and the permanently valid—"Ye have heard that they were told, . . . but I tell you. . . ."

But there is much that is as valid and relevant for

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our day as ever in the past. Such, for example, is the teaching of the eighth century prophets concerning social justice based upon the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. With the resources of our modern social sciences we are still far from a just solution of the problem of the production and distribution of the goods of life. With our racial prejudices and nationalistic conflicts we are still far from the realization in large-scale human relations of the conviction that God "from one forefather has created every nation of mankind, and made them live all over the face of the earth,"⁹ and of the universal point of view of the book of Jonah. Never was the personal conception of reality more relevant than in the presence of the mechanism of science and technology, nor the conviction that when as persons we approach reality in terms of intelligence and moral values it responds in kind. Never was love as a method of fulfilling human-divine relationships more relevant than in our complex modern world, notwithstanding that nearly twenty centuries ago Jesus, quoting from Israel's ancient law, said that upon it as a creative principle hung the Law and the Prophets. The penitential fifty-first psalm is still the confessional of sinning men seeking the forgiveness of a loving God.

⁹ Acts 17:26.

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This is why in facing specific problems we find help for our present needs in particular passages rightly interpreted in their historical context. This is because, notwithstanding the passing of time and change of circumstance, our life in its basic needs is much the same as that of those who have lived and aspired and struggled before us. Our human needs are like magnets suspended over these ancient records of experience—they call forth from their irrelevant, antiquarian accompaniments those eternally relevant, vital, and imperishable meanings and values of the human spirit. So, whether we are conscious of it or not, each one of us by selection makes his own living Bible. Some parts of one's Bible are as unsoiled by use as when they came from the printer. Other parts, like the Psalms, the Prophets, the Gospels, and the letters of Paul, are worn, underlined, and wet with tears. These portions have been baptized in the font of our hopes, our fears, our aspirations, and our defeats, where life has been faced in its immediate and stark reality.

4. We need to see the literature of the Bible and the experience which it records in their historical perspective. It is not enough that we lift out passages here and there to fit particular life situations, invaluable as such a selective use of the Bible may be. The functional use of the Bible requires quite as

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much that we shall see it as a whole living literature.

Only in this way can we see the religious life of the ancient Hebrew and early Christian communities in terms of process in which continuity and change are inseparably united—a process that is still creatively going forward. God's relation to man never has been and is not now something static and finished. Nowhere is this more evident than in the growing literature that records the expanding religious life and thought of the ancient Hebrews and early Christians. It is impossible to think of the religion either of the old Testament or of the New Testament except in the most general and abstract terms. Instead, one must think of *stages* in the *growth* of Hebrew religious thought, practices, and institutions, as in the nomadic period with its tribal concept of Jahwe, or in the period of migration and conquest with its militaristic conception of Jahwe, or in the period of settlement upon the land with its codification of laws and its building of national institutions, or in the period of international conflict with its universal, ethical, and spiritual concept of God. So in the New Testament we do not have a blueprint of the church, but the record of an expanding Christian movement through the period when it was a Jewish sect in Jerusalem to the period when it expanded beyond its Jewish environment and de-

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veloped as a universal Christian religion on Gentile soil. On the pages of the New Testament it is possible to trace the development of institutional structures that transformed a fellowship into a church and the outdoor life and teaching of Jesus into the beginnings of an elaborate theological system. Even during New Testament times, as the New Testament itself reveals, the earliest Christian tradition was undergoing reinterpretation under changing conditions just as it is in our day under the changed and changing conditions of the modern world.

Such a historic perspective makes it possible to have some sense of the distances the Hebrew-Christian religion came from primitive conceptions of God, of the nature of the world and man, of sin, of suffering, of redemption, to the lofty conceptions of Christ. Such a perspective makes it possible to see contemporary Christianity as the growing edge of a long historical movement. Such a perspective allows one to think of the *possibilities* of Christianity as it moves in new directions into an uncharted future in which God will be creatively at work. It is in this creative moment of the living present that our own life is set, and in which we are confronted by the living Christ who goes before us into some new Galilee beyond the empty tomb of the past. The

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God of Jesus was not the God of the dead, but the God of the living.

5. To bring the Bible into functional relation to our present experience it is necessary, therefore, to extract the enduring values of the Bible from their concrete historical contexts, so that they may be released for use in the enrichment and guidance of our own experience under the changed historical conditions in which we live. The historical situations in their concreteness are not reproducible. Neither are the values which they contain when bound up with their contexts. But enmeshed in history are the precious and enduring values, to some of which we have already referred, upon which our Christian living rests quite as much as did that of our fathers in the faith.

The releasing of these enduring values and the process of making them available for use in present experience is much like the refining of gold. In its natural state gold is embedded in crude ore. In this state it is not available for human use. By the processes of smelting and refining the precious metal is separated from rock and dross. When thus released, it can be used in meeting human needs. So, while we could not if we would restore the concrete conflict of the religion and culture of the Hebrews with the religion and culture of the Amorites,

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the value of social justice founded upon brotherhood is a fundamental principle upon which social relations in a highly mechanized and interdependent society must be worked out if we are to have a just and lasting peace. While it may be impossible for the modern Christian to accept the prescientific concept of the nature of the universe and creation by fiat, to him it remains as the deepest conviction that back of the natural world and history is the creative purpose of the living God. The fact that Jesus as reported by his disciples seems to have thought in terms of the demonology and eschatology of his age does not dim the radiance of the light that shone in his life and teaching. The fact that Paul held views regarding women that are rejected by the modern churches does not detract from the pure flame of his spirit and his unconquerable devotion to Christ and Christianity.

In fact, this was precisely the way in which Christ used his Bible, which was the Old Testament. When asked regarding the greatest commandment, his mind cut through all historic elaborations and accretions of tradition straight to the living heart of the ancient law and seized upon one statement from Leviticus and upon another from Deuteronomy and lifted from history the undying principle of love as regulative of one's relations to God and man. When

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confronted with the question as to whose wife in the resurrection the woman would be who under the levirate law had married seven brothers, he brushed aside the legal controversy and went straight to the fundamental spiritual relations of persons, saying, "You are wrong, because you do not understand the Scriptures nor the power of God."¹⁰ When criticized for allowing his disciples to pluck grain when passing through the wheatfields on the Sabbath, he seized upon an incident in David's experience and enunciated the abiding relation of the institution to the human spirit: "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath."¹¹ So also for us, the Bible is the earthen vessel in which have come down to us the undying insights, values, and achievements of countless generations of men and women who have sought and found God in their experience of life. The circumstances, the intellectual thought forms, the cultural framework—these dated concomitants falling away leave the imperishable elements of an undying faith. And because this is so, the Bible remains for us the most precious legacy of our Christian heritage. It is for us, as it was at the point of its origin, the Living Word.

¹⁰ Matt. 22:29.

¹¹ Mark 2:27.

4

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND PUBLIC EDUCATION

*W*HEN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IS APPROACHED FROM a functional point of view, it is immediately set in an entirely new relation to the total education of children and young people. It becomes, as we have seen, not something apart from the rest of the growing person's life, but a quality that potentially inheres in any and every experience arising out of the living person's interaction with his natural, social, and cultural world. The function of religion is, on the one hand, to integrate the more or less separate particular values that are operative in the entire range of practical interests and activities into a total meaning and worth of life in terms of its responsible relation to God; and, on the other hand, to bring every practical interest and activity under

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the searching criticism and reconstructive influence of these comprehending and spiritual values. Education is an affair of the whole person in relation to his total world of reality. No education that neglects the religious adjustment of persons or the religious aspects of culture past or present can on any account be considered adequate.

Nevertheless, in America education is divided between religious and secular interests. Under the principle of the separation of church and state, religion is excluded from public education. So far as public education as a function of society is concerned, the child's religious nature, the religious cultural heritage, and the child's religious needs are ignored. Such religious nurture as the child receives is left to private institutions, without co-ordination and general supervision. The present crisis has brought home to us the limitations and fundamental weakness of a system that neglects religious values. This neglect is the more astonishing in view of the part which Judaism and Christianity have played in the shaping of Western civilization and of American civilization in particular. The problem of making the resources of religion available in the total education of American childhood and youth is at once one of the most urgent and difficult problems of education under the existing conditions of American

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life. But it is the kind of problem that must be faced by both the state and the church with forthrightness and determination to find a solution that is consistent with both democracy and religion.¹

I

There is a new concern among educators and public leaders as well as churchmen about making the resources of religion available to every child and youth in the nation. The concern of public school officials regarding the place of religion in education is unequivocally enunciated in the Tenth Yearbook of the Department of Superintendence of the National Education Association:

Our society today awaits a new integration of knowledge, aspiration, and human purpose which will take into account the findings of science, the theory of evolution, the advance of technology, the fact of material abundance, and the growing power of the laboring classes, as well as the influence of great spiritual leaders. Until such an integration is forthcoming, the present condition of moral chaos is likely

¹ An earlier discussion of the relation of religious education to public education by the author appeared in *The Christian Century*, August 6, 1941. See also the author's chapter on "Educating for a New World Order" in *Religion and the Present Crisis*, John Knox, editor (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942), and an address by the author on "Religion in Education" in the *Proceedings of the Eighth Annual Meeting of the Kentucky Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools*, Maurice F. Seay, editor (University of Kentucky, December, 1942).

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to continue and the more fundamental problems of character education will defy solution. Whether this is the task of the church or some other agency we cannot say today; but it would seem to be a task that is essentially religious in nature.²

This growing concern was poignantly expressed in the commission of the President of the United States to the White House Conference on Children in a Democracy. In speaking of the needs of American children, he said: "We are concerned about the children who are outside the reach of religious influences, and are denied help in attaining faith in an ordered universe and in the fatherhood of God."³

For the first time in the history of the White House Conferences, the Conference of 1939-40 included a section on the religious needs of children, on the same basis as medical care, nutrition, housing, economic backgrounds of family life, relief, and education through the schools. No section of the Report received more concerned and meticulous care than the one on religion. Among its basic recommendations calling for action the Conference included the following:

Practical steps should be taken to make more available to

² *Character Education* (Washington: Department of Superintendence, 1932), p. 23; cf. also pp. 35-36, 190.

³ *Conference on Children in a Democracy*, Papers and Discussions (Washington: Children's Bureau, U. S. Dept. of Labor, 1939), p. 4.

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children and youth through education the resources of religion as an important factor in the democratic way of life and in the development of personal and social integrity. To this end the Conference recommends that a critical and comprehensive study be made of the various experiences both of the churches and of the schools in dealing with the problem of religious education in relation to public education. The purpose of such a study would be to discover how these phases of education may best be provided for in a total program of education, without in any way violating the principle of the separation of church and state.⁴

In the recent past there has been a nation-wide movement of considerable proportions, largely initiated by public school authorities, to give the churches opportunity to provide religious instruction on time released from the public school schedule, with or without credit. This proposal has most recently been extended to the high school level.

II

The problem in the form which it has now assumed is the outgrowth of a long historical process. The earliest schools in America were religious. Their curriculum consisted almost entirely of the hornbook containing the Lord's Prayer, the Bible, and the catechism. Teachers were chosen on the

⁴ *Conference on Children in a Democracy*, General Report (Washington: Children's Bureau, U. S. Dept. of Labor, 1940), p. 31.

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grounds of their piety and orthodoxy and the supervising visitors were for the most part clergymen. But as the result of several factors, such as the expansion of the frontier, the rise of the school district as a civil administrative unit, the urgent demands of a growing culture for a wider range of curriculum content, and the sectarianism of religion in America, the teaching of religion was excluded from the public school under the principle of the complete separation of church and state. Undoubtedly, among these factors the sectarianism of religion must be held chiefly responsible. As a result, education as a social function seeking to meet all the needs of all the children and young people was separated into two unrelated phases, the secular and the religious. The state assumed responsibility for a completely secularized education while the responsibility for religious education was thrust upon the churches.

The churches reacted to the situation thus created in different ways. Some communions, notably the Catholic and Lutheran, following the pattern of the Middle Colonies, established parochial schools in which the church assumed responsibility for the total education of its children, even at the expense of double taxation. Whatever other limitations the parochial system may have—and they are many—it can scarcely be said to fit into a democratic society.

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The Protestant churches for the most part adopted the Sunday school which had lately been imported from Great Britain. The Sunday school was a phase of the Philanthropic Movement in Europe, bringing together underprivileged waifs from the streets of Gloucester for rudimentary instruction in the three R's and for moral rehabilitation. Thus the conditions under which it arose were very different from those in America. After it was adopted by the churches its primary motive remained evangelistic, with a minimum of emphasis upon educational philosophy and technique. Its work has had to be done on a narrow margin of time and for the most part with inadequately trained lay teachers. Great as have been the improvements in the church's program of education in recent years—and they have been very great—the conditions under which the church must carry on its educational work under existing circumstances are such that, viewing the nation's need as a whole, the Sunday church school is lamentably inadequate.

Under the urgency of the inadequacy of the Sunday church school, religious education in recent years has been extended by the Protestant churches to include weekday religious instruction. This has been done either on time outside the public school schedule or on time released by the public schools upon

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the request of parents. With few exceptions such instruction has been given in church property, by teachers supplied by the churches, and at church expense, in many instances on a co-operative, inter-denominational basis. On the whole the teachers have had educational and professional training equivalent to that of teachers in corresponding public schools. This arrangement has very recently been extended to high school students, with credit given in the elective group of subjects toward graduation in a number of instances. At the moment this movement is rapidly growing, having been introduced in the larger cities, and, as was pointed out, largely upon the initiative of public school authorities.

Simultaneously and for the same reasons, the church has utilized the summer vacation period for religious instruction. Under this plan no adjustment with the public schools is involved. In this way advantage is taken of the free period when children would be unoccupied and unsupervised as well as of the availability of college students who are similarly free during the summer vacation. These conditions have made for a flexibility of program and have offered significant opportunities for experimentation in fruitful forms of Christian education.

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The reaction to the situation created by the exclusion of religion from the public schools has not been on the part of the churches alone. An increasing number of public school authorities have come to feel that the greatest weakness in public education is at the point of values and motives. As a result, in a number of instances religion has been introduced into the curriculum of the public school on the same basis as language, general science, literature, history, and the arts. Under this plan religion is being taught by the state, by state teachers, and on state funds. There is evidence that this tendency is growing.

In the light of history it now appears that what was at one time considered to be a solution of a difficult problem by the exclusion of religion from the public schools was in reality only palliative and, in its deepest aspects, no solution at all. It has bequeathed to our generation a problem much more complex and difficult than the original one. In the light of approximately a century of experience it now appears that the splitting of the education of the child and the youth by the exclusion of religion from public education as a social function has had at least five devastating results which are increasingly becoming intolerable.

1. It has distorted the cultural inheritance of

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children and young people by excluding one of the most fundamental and important phases of their culture. This, as we have suggested, is the more serious in view of the part which religion has played in the development of ideas and institutions in Western culture and of American culture in particular. This nation under God was founded upon religious ideals. Many who came to this new world did so in search of religious freedom. The Constitution and the Bill of Rights had written into them the guarantees of religious liberty. The nation's currency bears upon it the imprint "In God we trust." Those who assume public office take a solemn religious oath with hands or lips upon the Bible and with an invocation of God's help. Every session of Congress is opened with prayer for divine guidance. The countryside and cities are dotted with churches and synagogues dedicated to the worship of God. Washington on his knees at Valley Forge, Lincoln bowed in humble prayer, and President Roosevelt's four freedoms, including freedom of religion, and his invocation of God's help—all these bear solemn and reverent testimony to the way in which the nation has turned to God in moments of great crisis. Ours is in its basic ideals a religious nation, however short we have come of embodying these ideals in every aspect of our common life. This is the

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rightful heritage of childhood and youth—the culture into which they were born. It is a tragic mutilation of that cultural heritage that the public school as the most authentic interpreter of the American way of life should omit religion as an integral part of its program. A visitor from Mars, in taking the program of public education as the best criterion of what a people most highly value, would conclude that the American people are wholly secular and place little or no value upon religion.

2. The division of the growing person's education creates for him a serious emotional conflict. If he belongs to a religious family he is led in his home and church to believe that religion is the most important concern in life. But in his school, which he inevitably regards as the most authentic interpreter of our common life, he finds religion ignored. His orientation to reality and his loyalties are thus divided. His perplexity is deepened when the church, divorced from a scientific education, holds to a traditional and authoritative conception of religion which places a dogmatic interpretation of the Bible in conflict with what he learns from the natural and social sciences and from history in the school. To force him into this conflict is unnecessary and devastating. In this regard the church is as much in

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need of rethinking its religion as the school is in need of rethinking its educational program.

3. Personal counseling is more and more coming to be regarded as an important responsibility of the public school. Through the exclusion of religion from the school the resources of religion for counseling purposes is for the most part rendered unavailable. It is, however, the testimony of Dr. C. G. Jung that in his entire practice as a psychiatrist, involving persons of all types from many parts of the world, he had never had a case of maladjustment in persons over thirty-five years of age that did not fundamentally require a religious solution. This is at once obvious when one recalls what was said about the functional relation of religion to experience in the second chapter. Of all the integrating factors of personal and social life, such as philosophy and art, none has historically been so effective as religion with its organization of values, its philosophy of life, and its commitment to that which is felt to be supremely worthwhile. Here again it needs to be pointed out that in order to be effective in the highest degree in resolving emotional conflict religion needs to be functionally rather than dogmatically and authoritatively conceived.

4. Under the present organization of education, less than half of the children and young people from

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five to seventeen years of age are receiving any systematic instruction in religion whether Catholic, Jewish, or Protestant. This stark fact in a Christian nation lies back of the President's grave concern over "the children who are outside the reach of religious influences, and are denied help in attaining faith in an ordered universe and in the fatherhood of God." What, in time, will be the character of a nation whose future citizens come into civic responsibility with more than half of its children and young people oriented toward and equipped for life uninspired and unsupported by religious faith?

5. History raises grave doubts whether a purely secular ethics can bear the load of the moral demands of modern life, and especially of democracy. Democracy as a way of life is quite as dependent upon the support of a free religion as a free religion is dependent upon democracy. Unless democracy is inspired and supported by devotion to values and ideals that are essentially religious it can scarcely hope to compete with the totalitarian state with its devotion to "blood and soil" or a "new order for Asia." At the moment the most violent enemy of Christianity and Judaism is the religion of the totalitarian state. American democracy, as many are beginning to feel in the present crisis, must find its way back to God.

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III

What is evidently needed is a fresh study of this whole problem in the light of a century and a half of American experience and the unprecedented demands of the present world situation. Such a study seems to involve a rethinking of the functional relation of church and state in a democracy, a rethinking of the nature and ends of education as a social enterprise, and a rethinking of religion from the point of view of its functional relation to personal and social experience. What is here proposed as a step looking toward the solution of this problem is based upon the following assumptions concerning these three items.

1. It is assumed that in a democracy the church and the state should be institutionally separate. But in their functions they never have been and never can be separate. They are both the creatures and servants of society and are mutually responsible to society. Their constituent memberships overlap, members of the church being at the same time citizens of the state. At numerous points their functions overlap, as in the matters of the exemption of churches from taxation, titles to property, charters, and the validation of educational credits in church-supported schools. Both are concerned, though in complementary ways, with the well-being of all the

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people. Many of the functions which were at one time performed by the church, such as education, philanthropy, and many forms of social work, have been taken over by the state. In times of national crisis the state turns to the churches for morale. Whenever the welfare of the whole people is involved, they are of necessity brought into co-operative, not competitive, relations. Both are interrelated phases of a people's total culture.

2. It is assumed that education in its deepest sense takes place through the experiences which growing persons have in all aspects of their interaction with their physical, social, and cultural world. It takes place wherever growing persons are having experiences—in the home, in the church, in the school, in vocational choice, in leisure-time activities, in citizenship, and in the creation and enjoyment of art. Education cannot, therefore, be confined to any single institution, not even the school. Education is a function of the whole society. It follows, consequently, that there needs to be co-operation on the part of all the agencies that in one way or another affect the growth of persons, especially of the home, the church, and the school. This makes the educational process a function of the community rather than of any specialized institution. It is needless to say that the educational stereotypes that we have in-

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herited from the past do not satisfy this demand of education as a total social responsibility.

3. It is assumed that religion is functionally related to the experience of persons and groups and is, therefore, to be thought of as a quality of personal and social living in every dimension. It is not a special interest separated from the rest of life. It is a pervasive attitude and quality that infuses itself throughout the entire range of human interests and activities. It cannot be identified with theology, ritual, or institution, as indispensable as these may be in carrying on the functions of religion. It appears as and where situations are being faced and responded to in terms of religious attitudes and ideals.

In this co-operative relationship there are certain things that the school is better equipped to do than any other institution in making the resources of religion available to every child and youth in the nation.

1. It can deal with the subject matter of religion as a phase of culture, just as it deals with the subject matter of any other phase of culture. In fact, if the school is to interpret the whole of the growing person's culture and to meet the needs of the whole self, it is under obligation to do so. Religion is not merely a sentiment. It is as rich in content as the physical and social sciences, literature, or history. This objective content is as amenable to observation,

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analysis, and appraisal as any other subject matter. The literature of religion, including the Bible, is as much a part of the literary inheritance of the race as any other literature, and should be so dealt with. Religion has a history of ideas and institutions which are as much a part of the cultural inheritance as any other ideas and institutions, and should be so dealt with. Religion is as much a part of the contemporary and operative aspects of the community as are its banks, its factories, its stores, its transportation systems, or its courts. No introduction of the child or youth to the going life of his community, large or small, that neglects the activities or institutions of religion is realistic or complete.

This may be done in part by dealing with religion objectively and adequately wherever it is encountered in connection with the already existing subjects of the curriculum—in literature; in the history of ideas and institutions; in the social sciences, where religion appears as a form of collective behavior; in unitive science, where nature appears as an ordered and consistent interaction of natural processes; and in the arts. It may be done in part through the organization of a field of knowledge comparable with other fields of knowledge, in which the ample subject matter of religion—its literature, its development of ideas and institutions, and its contemporary

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operational phenomena—may be studied as any other field is studied, and with the same objective methods of observation, description, analysis, and appraisal.

2. The school can use the experiences of the classroom and the school community as opportunities for children and young people to have an actual experience of the higher spiritual values involved in them. It is not enough that these values shall be casually experienced. To be educationally fruitful they need to be raised into consciousness and identified. The author's colleague, Dr. E. J. Chave, has recently made a study of such elementary school experiences in which functional religious values are involved and has reduced them to ten categories for the guidance of teachers. These categories include development of a sense of the worth of persons, development of social sensitivity, growth in appreciation of the universe, growth in discrimination of values, growth in sense of responsibility and accountability, recognition of the need for co-operative fellowship, recognition that the quest for truth and the realization of ideals is a slow and endless pursuit, development of a working philosophy of life, observance of special times and ceremonies, and development of adequate means of expression of spiritual values and goals.

3. The school can use the resources of religion in

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its program of personal counseling. Any effective procedure in helping children and young people to resolve their conflicts inevitably involves not only particular values, but the revaluation of values and the achievement of a working philosophy of life. This carries counseling directly into the realm of religion as a valuational experience.

All these things the school, from the elementary grades to the university, properly reoriented to its social responsibility, can do without in any way violating the principle of the separation of church and state. It was never intended by the action establishing the separation of church and state that religion should be excluded from the school, but only its sectarian elements. The approach to religion that is here envisaged is functional, not theological, sectarian, or ecclesiastical. This functional approach to the child's cultural inheritance and his operative values does not involve sectarian differences which arise in the areas of theological formulations and ecclesiastical polity. These latter elements clearly belong in the several churches, which are at perfect liberty to teach them. But the cultural inheritance and a working system of values are by their very nature an integral part of the total education of childhood and youth, and no education can be considered complete that neglects them. This much the

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school would be under obligation to do if the church did not exist. The existence of the church does not relieve the school of this responsibility as the authentic interpreter of a people's essential culture.

On the other hand, in this co-operative relationship there are certain things the church is better equipped to do than any other institution in making the resources of religion available to every child and youth in the nation.

1. It can make explicit the values of the growing person's experience wherever they are encountered in terms of religious meanings and bring them to full expression in personal and corporate worship. The church, as no other institution, is in possession of the symbols, language, gestures, and religious objects that render such clarification possible. Religion, quite as much as science, has its language, its means of clarifying meanings, and its media of communication. Religion, quite as much as art, has its symbols for the expression of appreciations and emotions in hymns, ceremonial, liturgy, architecture, and drama.

2. It is possible for the church to initiate the child and youth into a concrete and specific religious tradition. Religious experience does not take place in a vacuum or merely in solitude. It is set in a tradition of thought and life—in a religious community with

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a long historic past. This recognition of the place of a particular religious tradition and community does not in any sense mean that the child or youth shall become a sectarian, but that his loyalties shall be firmly anchored in a human group sufficiently immediate and concrete to have substance and meaning for him.

3. It is possible for the church to provide a sustained and sustaining fellowship in which the growing person is a participant with status and responsibility. In the church as a face-to-face group of persons, religious values are predominant. Here one's life is set in the wide perspectives of a long and significant historic movement and of eternity. Here are provided tested techniques for self-examination and the rectification of one's ideals and commitments. In this fellowship one's aspirations are heightened by sharing and he is supported in his frustrations by the sense that they are borne by others of like mind and purpose.

4. The church affords an opportunity for commitment to specific causes sufficiently immediate and real to kindle the imagination, evoke the emotions, and release effort. Beyond these immediate causes and overarching them is the dream that glowed in the heart of the prophets and of Christ—of the realization in human relations of the Kingdom of

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God, a dream that the church has carried in its heart through all the centuries. Sometimes this vision has glowed with the light of the transfiguration. Sometimes it has been dimmed by other more immediate interests and by complacency. Sometimes its realization has been postponed to an otherworldly realm. Of late it is beginning again to burst into a flame of passion for a reconstructed social order in which the will of God shall be done on earth as it is in heaven. Commitment perhaps more than anything else is needed in education, but at the same time is most lacking. Commitment is a matter of devotion to supreme values, and supreme values are the essence of religious faith.

In this co-operative relationship the home carries responsibilities for making the resources of religion available to every child or youth—responsibilities that cannot be delegated to any other institution, whether church or school. The home is the threshold of religion as it is of democracy. Historically it has always been and still is the primary educational institution. In the home the child has his first introduction to the culture into which he is born, as he has to language, which is appropriately called his “mother tongue.” Here through unconscious participation he takes over the operative ideas and attitudes of society as they come to concrete expres-

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sion in that microcosmic society that is the family. Here in face-to-face relationships he is a person among persons, with affection, mutual concern, and support. Here, if his home is the right kind of home, more than anywhere else he finds understanding sympathy and security. In the earliest years of life in the family, attitudes are formed and conditionings occur that have profound influence upon the remainder of the child's life. In the home perhaps more than anywhere else the conviction is borne in upon one that the problem of education is not primarily one of the child, but of the adult members of society. Some have become so convinced of this that they have been led to believe that the most strategic approach to education is at the adult level. As all practicing psychologists and counselors know, problems of maladjustment in children and young people reduce themselves under analysis to a large extent to problems of maladjustment among parents and teachers. If the home is a genuinely religious community the child will by a living process incorporate into his own life the basic elements of a vital religious experience of his world of reality.

In like manner, did time permit, it would be possible to analyze the characteristic contributions which all social agencies might make to the religious nurture of the children and youth of the nation.

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IV

What is here proposed, therefore, is a step in the direction of making the resources of religion available to every child and youth in a new pattern of education based upon the recognition of its comprehensive nature as a function of the whole society achieved through the intelligent co-operation of its constituent agencies. Education so conceived will be accomplished by an analysis of the needs of children and young people and the allocation of services to the institutions best equipped to render these services.

The foregoing analysis of our present American educational setup seems to make it clear that as religion in America is organized it is impossible for the churches and synagogues to provide religious education for every child or youth. Their educational programs are of necessity directed toward the children and youth of their respective constituencies. This leaves untouched those great areas of child and youth population that lie between the church constituencies, and which under existing conditions constitute more than half of the child and youth population of the nation. Considering the wide differences between Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish sects, it seems unrealistic to expect that for a long time to come an educational program could be set up on an

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interfaith basis. Even if that remote hope were realizable, it is doubtful whether such an educational program as the churches might set up under existing limitations of time and educational competency would appeal to the entire public as commensurate with the education offered in the public school. Even if that were possible, as seems extremely unlikely, religious education would still be in competition with secular education. This would only further perpetuate and widen the division of the child's education and accentuate the present cleavage between religion and the rest of life. Such a solution, if it were within the limits of possibility, would only emphasize the undesirable elements in the present anomalous situation and leave unresolved the dislocations and tensions that are inherent in the existing American educational system.

If, on the other hand, the public school as the recognized and authentic interpreter of American culture were to take over the nonsectarian content of religion as a phase of the people's total life, the subject matter of religion, with properly trained teachers, would be competently taught to every child and youth. The churches thus would be relieved of a responsibility that properly does not rest upon them, and which they are not equipped to fulfill, and

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would be free to undertake in a competent manner those functions which only they can perform.

If the resources of religion are to be made available to every child and youth, the alternative to some such solution as is here proposed would seem to be either a totalitarian state or a totalitarian church. It is needless to suggest that such a solution is wholly incompatible with democracy, in which free institutions in a co-operative society assume an allocation of specific functions with mutual respect for the freedom and status of each other. Democracy is essential to a free religion as held by its different constituent groups, while religion, in turn, seems to be essential to the integrity of democracy.

Obviously the experiments of the parochial school, the Sunday church school, the weekday and vacation church schools, and the initial attempts to teach religion by the public schools have provided a fund of experience that should be invaluable in the analysis of the problem and the exploration of its possible solution. But that any or all of them are solutions perhaps none of their most ardent advocates would affirm. The problem is much deeper and more complex than these palliative approaches would suggest. It involves the basic structures as well as the fundamental ends of education as a function of the whole

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society of which both church and state are constituent and responsible members.

Certainly it is impossible quickly and out of hand to create the new pattern which the present educational situation seems to demand. It must grow out of deeper insights than we now possess. It would appear that the greatest need is for a profound analysis of the problem in which parents, educators, and churchmen as well as representatives of the various social agencies shall participate. In such co-operative explorations it would seem that great promise would attach to small-scale experiments in local communities under specific conditions in which parents, teachers, churchmen, and representatives of the social agencies would sit down before the needs of their children and young people and ask what each agency has to contribute out of its resources to their total education. Out of many such experiments under widely differing conditions there would almost certainly emerge types of procedure at least, if not a more generalized national pattern. Such experiments should be undertaken under the general supervision of some competent national body in whose membership would be included representatives of national educational bodies, national religious bodies, and laymen of broad experience and educational insight.

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It should be pointed out that the present unplanned and sporadic attempts to do something about this problem under the urgency of the present world situation, without an underlying educational philosophy projected on a national scale, are likely to result in more harm than good. A few unfortunate and unnecessarily mismanaged situations might easily place the problem back where it was when religion was originally excluded from public education. This might render a constructive solution impossible for many years to come. But with the wise guidance of a co-operating planning group representing a cross section of the nation and various educational and religious points of view, intelligent experimentation should result in a constructive solution of what has through the years been an increasingly unsatisfactory, and is now, in view of the world crisis, an intolerable, situation.

Notwithstanding the fact that under existing conditions religion is not, with few exceptions, taught in the schools, the American public school is not a godless institution. It would be impossible to find a more idealistic, sensitive, and devoted group of persons than those who constitute the teaching profession. Many of them are devotedly religious persons who are active in their several churches. Many of these are sustained in their work by the highest

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religious motives. These, in spite of the absence of formal religious occasions, communicate their spirit of reverence and devotion to the children and young people committed to their charge. There is much that goes on in the schools that is essentially religious but that may not bear the label of religion. When such as these come together with churchmen and parents to consider the spiritual needs of the community's children and young people rather than the prerogatives and prestige of institutions, there is great hope that a way will be found within the American tradition of a free church in a free society whereby no children or young people will continue to be "outside the reach of religious influences," or "denied help in attaining faith in an ordered universe and in the fatherhood of God."

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